PARTISAN REVIEW

PR

FALL 1939

AN INTERVIEW WITH IGNAZIO SILONE

JAMES RORTY
The Socialization of Muckraking

CLEMENT GREENBERG
Avant-Garde and Kitsch

LOUISE BOGAN
The Poetry of Paul Eluard

PAUL ELUARD
Two Poems

WOHLSTETTER & WHITE
Who Are the Friends of Semantics?

THE WAR OF THE NEUTRALS:
An Editorial

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SHERWOOD ANDERSON • LIONEL TRILLING
KENNETH REXROTH • C. R. JACKSON • R. P.
BLACKMUR • HORACE GREGORY • ROBERT
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PARTISAN REVIEW is published at 117 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y. Please address mail to: P. O. Box 34, Station D, New York, N. Y.

PARTISAN REVIEW *is published quarterly. Subscription:* $1.25 *yearly; Canada,* $1.35*; other foreign countries,* $1.50. *Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Copyright October* 1939, *by* PARTISAN REVIEW. *Entered as second-class matter, November* 26, 1938, *at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March* 3, 1879.

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TO OUR READERS

For some time, the editors of PARTISAN REVIEW have felt that more frequent appearance of the magazine would have certain advantages, in the way of timeliness and flexibility, over the present quarterly publication. Recent events have crystallized our decision. Beginning with the next issue, which will appear early in December, PARTISAN REVIEW will appear, in an eighty-page format, every other month.

Another advantage of this more frequent publication is that it is possible to make a considerable reduction in the price of PARTISAN REVIEW per copy and per year. The new subscription rates, effective with the next issue, are: $1 a year; additional postage for Canada, 15 cents, for other foreign countries, 30 cents. Single copies will be 25 cents.

Present subscribers to PARTISAN REVIEW will have their subscriptions extended on the basis of two of the new issues for every one quarterly issue still coming to them.

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This Quarter

THE WAR OF THE NEUTRALS

THE WAR ABROAD, at the moment of writing, is like a movie that has abruptly been struck into immobility by the jamming of the projection apparatus. The film started off briskly and portentously enough, with the ratification of the Stalin-Hitler Pact by the Soviet Congress, and the first German guns roaring in Poland a few hours later; the ultimatums of England and France to Hitler, followed by formal declarations of war; the swift, brutal German *blitzkrieg* in Poland; the massing of French troops in the Maginot Line; the disappearance of the British High Fleet into the North Sea on war duty; the torpedoing of the *Athenia;* the nightly blackouts in Paris and London. It seemed that the final cataclysm, long expected, was at last here.

But once the Reichswehr and the Red Army had divided Poland amicably between them, the film jammed. For weeks now, the great European powers have been facing each other on the Western front, their furious gestures of hostility frozen into fantastic rigidity. And while the armies, ranked in battalions and divisions and corps from the North Sea to the Alps, face each other expectantly behind their fortifications, the politicians of the belligerents wage a desperate, last-minute struggle behind the lines for the support of neutral powers. Here, for the present, is the real struggle. If war is the continuation of politics by other means, as Clausewitz said, politics can also be temporarily substituted for war.

This suspension of serious warfare has cast an air of ambiguity over the whole business. It is clear that the players in the game, whose stake is nothing less than world power, are not yet all lined up. Until the final crystallization takes place, only the most provisional sort of analysis can be undertaken. These pages are an attempt to throw some light on the positions of the two great—and

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decisive—unknown factors in the equation now being worked out abroad: the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and the United States of America.

The ambiguity in the American position is solely in the conditions and timing of our intervention on the side of the Allies. There is no question that a German victory would be a disaster to American capitalism, and that, when and if the Allies seem to be in serious danger of losing the war, the United States will come to their aid with whatever manpower and munitions seem necessary. But our sister "democracies" are also our rivals for world power and our competitors in those export markets which monopoly capitalism finds ever more essential. The more the Allies are exhausted by the war, the better for the interests of American capitalism. The aim of our diplomacy, therefore, is to wait until the last possible moment, but not to delay our entrance into the war so long that the Allies are defeated before American aid can reach them. It is a nice calculation, and in working it out, the Roosevelt Administration will be guided primarily by the interests of big business. It is not a question of the United States letting itself be used as a pawn by French and British imperialism, as the isolationists charge. Nor is it the reverse of the medal, as maintained by the liberal weeklies and the left-wing New Dealers: a matter of an idealistic America bringing aid to its sister democracies in order to save the world from fascism. No, the United States is also an imperialist power, the mightiest of them all, it also has a huge economic stake in the struggle, and it will intervene for one purpose only: to protect its own imperialistic interests.

I.

The position of the Soviet Union, the other great "neutral," is more ambiguous, and requires more detailed analysis.

So far the most important result of the war has been the exposure of the real political content of Stalinism. Ever since Hitler came into power, the Third International has posed as the great champion of the democratic masses against the menace of fascism. But with the first gun fired in Poland, its big pretensions fell away, its humanitarian vaporings condensed into cynical *realpolitik*. The transition was made in the abrupt and whole-hog style habitual to

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the Kremlin bureaucracy. A few weeks ago, the Comintern was agitating for a world crusade against Hitler. Now that the crusade has taken place, it is discovered to be an imperialist adventure. Stalin has been transformed overnight from an international philanthropist, whose pipe was an index of his philosophical benevolence, into a Metternichean power politician, his pipe-puffing now signifying preternatural guile.

The liberals and fellow-travelers have been shocked at last into recognizing that the Kremlin's interests are not those of the international working class but rather those of—the Kremlin. They have been able to make this long overdue adjustment only because Stalin has rejected democratic imperialism in favor of fascist imperialism. But to those of us who make no such fundamental distinctions between the various forms of imperialism, the Kremlin years ago revealed the true nature of its foreign policy when it entered the League of Nations and made common cause with the Versailles powers.

There are many who insist that this final betrayal of the international working class was implicit in the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, that the logic of Leninism leads "inevitably" to Stalinism. We believe, on the contrary, that the Soviet government has been obliged to go in for power politics because it long ago abandoned the Leninist conception that the defense of the Soviet Union was inseparably bound to the liberation of the masses in other countries. The degeneration of the 1917 revolution is not to be understood in terms of the free, unhampered working out of Bolshevik theory to its "logical conclusion." The principal factors in the rise of Stalinism, on the contrary, seem to us to have been the impact of such largely uncontrollable phenomena as the devastation and demoralization caused by the protracted armed intervention of the Allies, the economic and cultural backwardness of Russia, and the failure of the revolution to establish itself in any other major country. The isolation of the revolution led to the rise to power of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which meant increasing clashes between the interests of the bureaucracy and those of the masses, both inside and outside of Russia, which in turn led to the bungling or the outright sabotage of world revolution by the Comintern, from China in 1927 to Spain ten years later. Since a successful revolution abroad would have had repercussion inside Russia which

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would have shaken and perhaps overthrown the bureaucracy, the Kremlin was unable to base its foreign policy on the international working class and had no choice except to look for support among the capitalist governments of Europe, playing one off against another in the usual manner of imperialist power politics.

This fear of the Soviet masses and the international proletariat is the key to Stalin's foreign policy. Realizing the insecurity of his regime, Stalin, like Chamberlain who also fears revolution above all things, has one basic objective: to avoid war at all costs. An alliance with the democracies last summer would probably have meant that the Reichswehr, after mopping up in Poland, would have marched against the Soviet Union. On the other hand, as is now being demonstrated, it was possible to make common cause with Hitler without provoking any military intervention from the Allies. Both political and geographical considerations made Hitler the preferable ally for a Russia which above all else wanted to avoid war.

The swindle perpetrated on those who for years sincerely believed in the Comintern's "collective security" policy was on a Staviski scale. This formula for saving the world from fascism now turns out to have been all along nothing more dignified than a club for Stalin to use in his bargaining with Hitler—or, at best, in case Stalin found himself finally unable to come to terms, a fire escape. It is now clear that Krivitsky and others were right when they charged that Stalin has been the persistent suitor and Hitler the indifferent maiden in the long courtship that has at last achieved success. As long as France and England, fearing war and possible revolution more than they feared Hitler, stuck to appeasement, Hitler had no need of Stalin either as an ally or as a friendly "neutral," since he could get what he wanted without war.* In this period, there were no lengths to which Stalin would not go to convince the democracies that his regime was not revolutionary and could be trusted as an ally. This policy culminated in the betrayal of the Spanish revolution in order to signalize the respectability of the Kremlin to the French and British foreign offices.

When Germany moved into Czechoslovakia last winter, France and England realized that Hitler would set no bounds to the expan-

*The Stalinists now claim it was the appeasement policy of the "Munichmen" which drove Stalin into the arms of Hitler. Actually, the situation was precisely the reverse: Stalin was unable to make an alliance with Hitler, despite his earnest efforts, until appeasement had come to an end.

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sion of the Reich, and that if their own imperialisms were to survive, the Nazi bid for world power must be crushed. They prepared for war. Hitler at once became receptive to the overtures of the Kremlin, and at last, step by step, each perfectly timed to produce the maximum effect on the "democratic" front, the solidarity of Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany was published to the world. And step by step, the American Communist Party has been dragged along the road, its end not yet in sight, protesting at each sharp turn to the right that the *next* turn would be leftward.

At the end of August, the Russo-German trade agreement is announced. The *Daily Worker* first rejects the news as a bourgeois canard, then declares this is a purely economic matter with no political implications. *A few days later the mutual assistance pact is published.* The *Daily Worker* is sure there is an escape clause in the full document. *It turns out there is none.* Well, anyway, the pact means a peaceful solution of the Polish issue and is thus a mighty blow for peace. *Germany masses her troops on the Polish border.* The Soviet Congress will never ratify the pact! The Red Army will defend Poland! *At 10:40 on the night of August 31, the Soviet Congress votes unanimous ratification; at 5:45 the next morning, the Reichswehr crosses the Polish border.* One thing, at least, is clear: Stalin has no imperialist ambitions. He will never invade Poland! *The Red Army annexes the Eastern half of Poland.* By now the American friends of the Kremlin are digging in at their last-ditch position: it is all a Machiavellian scheme of Stalin to lure Hitler into a war that will destroy him. *But already* Pravda *has urged the Allies to accept the peace terms which were drawn up by Ribbentrop and Molotov, that is, to appease Hitler on a scale compared to which Munich was a heroic battle.*

II.

When the shattering news of the Pact was announced, one of the American comrades is said to have remarked triumphantly to a bourgeois friend, "I guess *this* will prove to you that we don't have any pipeline to Moscow!" But even this modest gain cannot be extracted by the Party from the wreckage caused by the Pact. It is probably true that the American Party hierarchy were not informed in any detail as to just what was going to happen—and

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when. But, judging from a significant change in Party propaganda in the months immediately preceding the Pact, the chiefs at least knew something was in the air. In the daily ritual anathemas of the *Daily Worker*, Hitler and Mussolini began to yield their places of honor to Chamberlain and Daladier. In any well-ordered bourgeois household like the Third International, the butler may not know exactly where—or how far—the master is going, but he knows enough to pack the bags and call a cab.

For all their premonitions, however, the Party chiefs seem to have been unprepared for the abruptness with which Stalin executed his about-face. For weeks the ideological bedlam was something extraordinary even for the Communist Party. In a single interview given out by Browder there might be counted from three to five mutually exclusive "explanations." For a while, the Party stood firm on two major political lines in sharp conflict with each other. The stirring peals of anti-fascist unity of all men of good will continued to boom out, the Pact being presented as the bombshell that shattered the Rome-Berlin-Tokio axis and the death-blow to Hitlerism, and the newborn war being supported with the same old ardor. At the same time, a new note, reminiscent of the "Third Period" days of ultra-revolutionism, began to be heard: this is an imperialist war . . . the Munichmen are the tools of finance capital . . . the Soviet Union is well out of the whole bloody mess.

Even in the Communist Party, such a state of confusion could not safely be allowed to last very long. To the surprise of many observers, the Party bureaucracy has chosen to stick by Moscow—and Hitler—rather than to break away and continue to function as the extreme left wing of the New Deal war machine. This choice is of the utmost significance in estimating the nature of the Party and its relation to the American scene. If the Party had cut loose from the Comintern in favor of the New Deal, it would have meant that its social base—both as to jobs for its bureaucrats and the real inner life of the Party—had shifted to indigenous reformism of the New Deal and American Labor Party variety. But, although such a course would have enabled the Party to continue its rapid growth of recent years and its friendly relations with the New Deal, this course was not taken. Instead, the Party has clung to Moscow, and is now denouncing the war and calling for peace at any price. It has moulted almost its entire brilliant plumage of fellow travel-

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lers and "innocent" organizations, has sacrificed much of its influence over the labor movement, and has not only lost its favored position with the government in Washington but has at one stroke become a prominent object of governmental persecution.

That in spite of all this, the Party bureaucracy found itself unable to break with Moscow, shows how thoroughly Stalinized the Party apparatus has become. Indeed, it is misleading to speak of Browder and the rest having made a "choice." For all their long cohabitation with native American reformism, they remained the loyal agents of the Kremlin in American politics. It is also remarkable that the rank and file of the Party seems to have stood firm in these trying weeks. There were defections, but apparently not on a mass scale. And a recent Party rally was able to fill the twenty thousand seats of Madison Square Garden with a reasonably enthusiastic, all things considered, crowd of comrades. The disciplined, monolithic character of the Party organization shows up most dramatically.

There is something really terrifying about this mindless, passive acceptance of directives, however irrational, from above, this abdication on the part of tens of thousands of more or less sincere radicals of all critical judgment. One feels that if the Party were ordered—by the proper authorities, of course—to march over a cliff en masse, it would obey. And this, metaphorically speaking, is just what the American Party has been ordered to do. Even in the best of periods, the Party has a very large turnover of members, some say as much as thirty or forty per cent a year. Even if the ranks hold fast on this issue now, it seems likely that the Party will waste away rapidly as old members drop out and no new people come in to replace them. For the present Party line, acceptable though it may be to disciplined members, has practically no attraction for those outside the Party.

The present C. P. line on war is a weird mixture of pseudo-isolationism and pseudo-revolutionism. We say "pseudo" because it all boils down to a tactic directed toward no more elevated end than the protection of the mutual interests of Moscow and Berlin. The Party's "isolationism" can be dismissed in a few words. It has nothing in common with the indigenous midwestern variety, which is naieve and provincial but is at least honestly concentrated on keeping this country out of a European war. The Party, too, now

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advises the American masses to keep out of the imperialist bloodbath, which in itself is excellent advice. But what the Party, as Moscow's agent in this country, is really interested in is not peace or isolationism but the victory of Hitler-Stalin over the Allies, just as last winter, when it was shrieking for a democratic holy war against Hitlerism, it was really concerned not with any such high-flown business at all but quite simply with the implementation of the Kremlin's ultimately successful attempt to force Hitler into an alliance. C. P. "isolationism" has nothing to do with the interests of the American masses, and will be chucked overboard tomorrow when and if the Kremlin's foreign policy takes a new turn.

The "revolutionary" line on the war is a smokescreen to obscure two awkward realities: (1) the Moscow-Berlin alliance; (2) the Red Army's division of Poland with the Reichswehr, and the more recent imperialist diplomatic drive against the Baltic states. The general idea is that the Soviet Union is a socialist state and that, in the interests of the world revolution, anything goes.

The comrades explain away the alliance with Hitler as a smart trick: Stalin doesn't "really" trust Hitler and is merely "using" him for the time being, to betray him later on. Thus the Soviet Union is not committed to the fascist side. But this is nothing more than normal, everyday imperialist power politics. No one "really" trusts any one else, and every one "uses" their allies as much as he can, and betrays them whenever it is to his interest to do so. Stalin made a pact with Hitler, and if the Allies seem to be winning later on, Stalin will probably betray Hitler and return to the democratic camp. Mussolini also made a pact with Hitler, and he, too, if the Allies seem to be winning, may be counted on to turn traitor to the Axis and become as ardent a democrat as—Daladier. In that case, according to the Party line, Il Duce will have also struck a mighty blow for world socialism.

As for the Red Army's recent exploits, these are also hailed as mighty strokes for socialism. Nothing is more ludicrous than the attempts of the Stalinists to picture these "provincial conquests," in Trotsky's phrase, as though they represent the spreading of the October revolution to the rest of the world. Even as imperialist burglaries, they are not very impressive. The Polish "campaign" of the Red Army, in which the chief excitement was provided by the tanks getting stuck in the mud or running out of gas, was the

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sort of hollow victory over a prostrate and inferior foe that the Fascist legions won in Ethiopia. And like the Ethiopian campaign, its chief utility was for internal consumption to soothe the grumbling masses and to inflate a little the collapsed morale of the Red Army.

As for world revolution, it is noticeable that the Third International, in its current anti-war phase, has not dared to raise anywhere the classic Leninist slogan, the only possible basis for a revolutionary opposition to war: Turn the imperialist war into civil war! The Kremlin is no more anxious for world revolution than is Downing Street or the White House.

But Trotsky propounds the final and unanswerable question: "If the Kremlin wants to foment world revolution, how could it sacrifice its influence over the international working class for the sake of occupying some border territories?" "Eleven million more people enjoy socialism!" exults the *New Masses*. But what of the hundreds of millions of French and English and Indian and Chinese and American and German and Italian and other workers throughout the world whose faith in socialism has received this ultimate betrayal by the Kremlin gang and its agents throughout the world? The exposure of Stalinism as the implacable enemy of the international working class had to come sooner or later, and it will be, in the long run, a healthy and progressive development. But the immediate effects are shattering and demoralizing. The labor and socialist movement the world over has hardly been in a century in such a state of collapse as today. For this tragic situation the Kremlin and its dupes and agents—the Browders and Pollitts and Thorezes, the Lamonts and Stracheys and Cowleys and Lerners and Hickses and Schumanns and Brouns—must bear full responsibility. Some of these have already broken with Moscow, though for the most part in a hypocritical and disingenuous way, and more will do so in the future. Those who keep silent or who continue to support the policies of the Third International must from now on be called bluntly what they are: agents of the Kremlin and, for the present at least, of Hitler.

III.

The shift of Stalin to the side of Germany was temporarily embarrassing to the liberals who had so long accepted his regime as a mainstay of the "democratic" front. But already they are

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recovering from their first pained surprise and boldly denouncing "Red Totalitarianism" and "Communist Imperialism." Some one who first began to read the liberal weeklies a month ago would never suspect there was a time when these journals were, to say the least, on intimate terms with Stalinism. For the pact has really simplified the whole pro-war liberal position. For some time now the liberals have been made uncomfortable by the increasingly plain indications of the totalitarian nature of the Stalinist dictatorship. Neither the Czar in the last war nor Stalin in this one could be called ideal bed companions for the defenders of democracy. The liberals, of course, put up with them as long as they seemed to be necessary for the great crusade. But there is a remarkable similarity in the editorial reactions to the defection of the Soviet Union from the democratic front this time and the liberal weeklies' editorials on the overthrow of Czarism in 1917. Now, at last, is the general idea, the battle line is sharply drawn between the forces of freedom and of tyranny. No longer must they labor to explain away or suppress the crimes and corruptions emanating from the Kremlin.

More clearly than ever do they see this war as essentially an ideological conflict, a clash of ideas translated into military terms. The life-principle (democracy) is locked in mortal—or at any rate, soon-to-be-mortal — combat with the death-principle (fascism) between the Maginot Line and the Westwall, and the full rhetoric of freedom, slightly motheaten by now, is enlisted on behalf of the Allied arms.

The first world war opened an era in which imperialist struggles for power are presented, by both sides, as Armageddons fought out to decide eternal principles. This is a refinement in the art of war peculiar to the twilight of capitalism. In the formative centuries of European capitalism, wars were publicly recognized as instruments of commercial and territorial aggrandizement. No one thought it necessary to amalgamate cultural values and military objectives. It was typical that Frederick the Great entertained Voltaire and immersed his court in the superior French culture at the same time as he was prosecuting war against France. These wars, of course, were little more than duels between professional armies, with the normal processes of life going on behind the battle-lines.

War in our time, however, is totalitarian, requiring the coordination into the military machine of the whole civil life of the

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nation. Furthermore, war today being so vastly more destructive in its effects on life and property than past wars, and also being so increasingly inconclusive and futile even in terms of power politics —what did the last war settle?—it is all the more essential to create powerful ideological sanctions for the slaughter. The basic sanction of this sort is the myth of national unity, the patriotic love of fatherland which is supposed to rise above material and individual interests, uniting all classes in the defense of a common cultural ideal. This nationalist sanction reached its full development in the last half of the last century. To it our own century has added another, one which is especially potent in liberal and intellectual circles. This is a sort of "international patriotism," so to speak— the idea that the world is divided between the forces of "democracy" and "autocracy" (1914-1918), or, this time, "freedom" and "fascism."

The old-fashioned nationalist arguments in favor of our participation in the war are not particularly dangerous in liberal-labor circles. It is the internationalist doctrine which is really seductive. We are faced, its advocates assert, with a concrete threat to the free institutions of Western civilization, and we cannot remain indifferent to the possible victory of fascist Germany. Many of them admit the last war was a doctrinal fraud, but this war, they say, is "different," since fascism is incomparably more threatening than Kaiserism ever was. Some will even admit that the Allied cause is tainted with imperialism, but, as Freda Kirchwey of the *Nation* recently put it: "The qualified blessings of old-fashioned imperialism must be preserved as a bulwark against the spread of fascist domination." Fascism is the brute fact, and all theories must be adapted—read "perverted"—towards the great end of its defeat.

The general idea is that the Kaiser made war for the simple aims of what Miss Kirchwey with nostalgia calls "old-fashioned imperialism": to get colonies, to break England's mastery of the seas, to open up new markets; while Hitlerism has all these aims plus another of a quite different and more sinister category: to extend the fascist political system throughout the world. It is true that there are still important differences between political life in France and in Germany, but this is not because France has not yet been conquered by Germany, but because French capitalism has not yet reached the crisis stage of its German prototype. As we

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pointed out in our editorial last spring, fascism is produced by the internal development of monopoly capitalism, not by any force of arms from outside. In the same way, the foreign policies of the fascist nations are determined, as are those of the "democracies," by the needs of their internal economies, which are still based on capitalist property relations. The differences between this war and the last are mostly to be found in new diplomatic forms and alliances which merely play over the surface of events and can be understood only as reflections of the basic imperialist antagonisms among the great powers of Europe. If fascism turned to aggression as a matter of principle, spreading the true faith with fire and sword in Islamic fashion, one would expect to find Italy and Germany fighting together in this war. Actually, of course, the economic and geographical differences between the two nations have proved to be decisive, and Italy is not only neutral but may very well repeat her performance of the last war and join the Allies.

Last spring we noted that no one looked forward with any real enthusiasm or even confidence to the outcome of the second world war. Now that the war has come, this is still true. The embattled "democracies" have not ventured to define their war aims any more specifically than, "Hitlerism Must Go!" (And what must Come?) On both sides, the morale of the population is low.

For this is the tragedy's second performance. We have seen it all before! This is where we came in! And it is impossible to muster the same emotions of horror and surprise which the first showing exacted from us. In the very novelty of the thing, in the feeling, moreover, that an event so unprecedented must belong to the order of natural calamities, the 1914 generation found some little comfort. They had discovered, as Paul Valéry said, that "the most beautiful and ancient things, the most formidable and best-ordered, are perishable *by accident.*" But even the attitude of discovery, the shocked surprise of the old-world humanist to things undreamt of in his philosophy, is denied to us today. And it is a fact that the newspapers, the cartoons, and even those shrines of moral indignation, the liberal journals, have so far shown a curious restraint. It is not the restraint of scientific detachment, however, nor does it arise from a settled sense of rectitude; it is the low-toned voice of the guilty conscience. For most people know today that war is not a cosmic accident, nor the result of cruel impulses rooted in human nature. On the contrary they know that

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it belongs among those phenomena which, properly understood, are subject to human control.

This control, however, cannot be exercised by the ruling classes in the great imperialist democracies, for it is the economic system which serves their interests which also must resort to these periodic military bloodlettings in order to resolve economic conflicts otherwise insoluble. Within the perspective of capitalism, the best that can happen if the Allies win the war is a new Versailles, followed by the same round of political convulsions as ended up in the triumph of fascism. For it seems impossible that the war will not bring on immeasurably greater economic crises than any we have yet known, and that the mass desperation which these will provoke can be curbed by anything short of the abandonment of all democratic forms.

Many liberals, of course, are aware of the precariousness of the pro-war position. But they cling to it because they profess to see no alternative to entrusting the anti-fascist cause to the armies of imperialism. This is not surprising, since they reject the Marxist analysis of war and fascism as products of the capitalist system itself. But in their recoil from the revolutionary socialist program, they are forced back, step by step, to the most naked apologetics for imperialism. As the war has drawn nearer this country, the space between the revolutionary and the imperialist positions has steadily shrunk until it will soon not be big enough for even a *New Republic* editor to balance himself upon.

It is notable that the pro-war liberals can still support one cause with real enthusiasm: the revolutionary mission of the German people to overthrow Hitlerism. But even here they are involved in a hopeless contradiction. For an Anglo-French invasion is bound to arouse German patriotism, rallying all classes behind Hitler in a war of "national defense." Thus French and British nationalism cancel out German nationalism in favor of the imperialist interests dominating both camps. In fact, an imperialist war can be waged only so long as national unity is maintained on both sides of the firing line. The international solidarity of the workers, with the masses in each nation fighting not against their brothers across the border but against their own capitalist governments, is the only force that can either bring into being real democracy or make war and fascism unnecessary. This is the alternative which our liberals find either too Utopian or too bloodthirsty.

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Clark Mills

PASTORAL FOR POLAND

Now have the cries of bombed and drowned
a gentle, elegaic sound;
rumor of grief and news of pain
drench the dull mind like autumn rain.

And now the innocent and wise
crouch from the menace of blue skies
till they lie broken, or in flight
towards the ignorant shield of night.

The burning forest of the nations
wheels under the constellations;
the iron birds roar the bomb-routes; deep
in the explosions children sleep.

Together in the cool of day
the placid, great-limbed beasts of prey,
strong at the twilight hour, and feeding,
rend the sweet flesh before them bleeding,

and formless forms in slippers and cowl
watch with the still, round eyes of the owl,
soar from the tree of faith to bless
the perfect act of ruthlessness,

and crickets ring the leafing fire
chirping with terror and desire,
and the rest, under the shadowed hill,
rustle and scurry and are still.

—In the exhausted hour of peace
whom shall we honor among these?
The martyrs bleeding by the wall,
the humble, who cry out and fall,
and these are all, and these are all.

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James Daly

AFTER SHIPWRECK

Then, then when

Beyond jagged cluster of rocks
The beach
surpassing terror's forecast
Plunged desolate toward our raft

We remembered
hands, hands
O the seen suck and those
Eyes emerging, those sodden
Braids

Explosion had torn those
Mouths, even the glazed eyes were bloody

We the alive remembered

Fragments of bodies
A dead rat clutching a dead woman's hair

Wide away gone ripplings
Stricken with smoulder
The of-shrieks the of-steel the
Of-smoke
phantasmal memory while

Beach plunged toward us, bleakest
(Except for a distant bird that winged up,
It seemed a flamingo)
Bleakest paradise that ever
Heart cried out to

When its cry was Land

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Theodore Roethke

BALLAD OF THE CLAIRVOYANT WIDOW

A kindly Widow Lady, who lived upon a hill,
Climbed to her attic window and gazed across the sill.

"O tell me, Widow Lady, what is it that you see,
As you look across my city in God's country?"

"I see ten million windows, I see ten thousand streets,
I see the traffic doing miraculous feats.

The lawyers all are cunning, the business men are fat,
Their wives go out on Sunday beneath the latest hat.

The kids play cops and robbers, the kids play mumbley-peg,
Some learn the art of thieving, and some grow up to beg;

The rich can play at polo, the poor can do the shag,
Professors are condoling the cultural lag.

I see a banker's mansion with twenty wood-grate fires,
Alone, his wife is grieving for what her heart desires.

Next door there is a love-nest of plaster board and tin,
The rats soon will be leaving, the snow will come in."

"Clairvoyant Widow Lady, with an eye like a telescope,
Do you see any sign or semblance of that thing called 'Hope'?"

"I see the river harbor, alive with men and ships,
A surgeon guides a scalpel with thumb and finger-tips.

I see grandpa surviving a series of seven strokes,
The unemployed are telling stale unemployment jokes.

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The gulls ride on the water, the gulls have come and gone,
The men on rail and roadway keep moving on and on.

The salmon climb the rivers, the rivers nudge the sea,
The green comes up forever in the fields of our country."

John Wheelwright

A FUNERAL PALL IN CELLOPHANE

An evil Boston woman loved the Virgin
with merely nearly mediaeval marvel.
When she grew old, she stuck together a junk shop
the texture of whose court, unfortunately,
inspired the taste of Alice Stone Blackwell
(I mean Alice Foote Macdougal) Restaurants.
Fed by the interior court's interior life
she lived off canned baked beans and cold corned beef
and bore false witness at the Customs House.
Her "guests" at restaurants paid their checks for dinner.
She threw nothing away. She was a mummy.
She gave good folks hysterics at the Opera
poking her magenta-ed hair and ostrich-plumed
monkey face at them between box curtains.
She scrubbed down Altar steps every Good Friday;
Sandow received her and her friends stark naked;
She had a Requiem Mass sung every Christmas,—
for the Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary.
"It's not a hospice; but a hoax," she said,
"There's not a charitable eye or ear in Boston"—
all this because they christened her Isabella.

She took as lovers Boston's public citizens;
Opera and Drama flourished in her life time
while Politics became brutal and dull,—
all this because her maiden name was Stuart.

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Women whose pretty faces had no bodies
women with ugly faces without beauty
women whose power depended on each other
said she was not a LADY, that no LADY
with any moral sense could leave cards on her;
but she kicked up rubied heels and thanked the Lord.
When young, because her things-in-law were Gardners,
she was invited to my grandmother's party.
Her footmen bore her on a light white satin litter
straight up the flying stair Bulfinch designed
and set her down, thump-thump, in the back parlor.
Thus did she lie on lilies and on roses
in a white satin cuirass she could not stand in
with parma violets at either hip bone
while men crossed and uncrossed their legs all evening,
like bees who cluster round a honey cluster;—
all this because she said she sprained her ankle.

The levee ended when her footmen entered
and my grandfather said: "Recumbent Lady,
I hope that when you come again you will be
perpendicular, not horizontal."

Winfield Townley Scott

INDIAN SUMMER — BUFFALO SUMMER

Opened like a big new colored-picture book,
The morning took us early with the summer wind
Coming over the streets and yards from the harbor.

There was no game good enough for that morning.

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By 10 o'clock my mother put on her new shirtwaist
And Aunt Essie was there in her black hat with the cherries.

I ran ahead of them, all the way to the corner
Clutching my cap-pistol, ran out of the sun
And climbed a bench in the little park under the walnuts.

It must have been time: on the curbs all fathers and mothers,
Even Miss Pitman and her cane, old Mr. Kaull and his pipe,
Baby Shea, the big policeman, in the middle of Broadway.

Just as I caught my sister and pulled out her hair-ribbon
O then we stood still and amazed, hearing far off
The sweet incredible fife, the murmur of coming drums.

Every now and then a cop on a motorcycle.
But at last over the dust, out of the shade and light,
The Indians rode before us their arrogant horses.

Ah I had no genuine breath for such word made flesh—
The brown torsos, cheekbones, streaked with warpaint,
The head-dresses blowing wide like unfurled turkeys.

Then came the squaws, then came the little Indians,
And cages with buffalos, wolves, hyenas, coyotes,
An ancient stage coach waddling, and then the scouts—

The scouts with lashed-leather gloves and buckskin jackets,
Bearing their rifles bravely across their knees,
And then just behind them an old man in an open carriage.

Old, old Buffalo Bill, bowing and smiling,
Lifting his hat from his long white hair, and riding
Right up Broadway in a little yellow-wheeled cart.

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An Interview With Ignazio Silone

Editor's Note: While he was in Europe last summer, Clement Greenberg spent an afternoon with Ignazio Silone in Zurich, Switzerland. The following article was later written out by Silone, based on Greenberg's notes of the conversation and his own recollections. It has been translated from the French by Nancy and Dwight Macdonald.

In the event of a war between Italy and France, which country would you favor?

Tunisia.

What do you mean?

The world is now divided into two great fronts: one composed of the conservatives, that is, of the democracies and other partisans of collective security; the other composed of the revisionists or fascists. Neither of these two fronts is capable of assuring peace or of solving the economic and political problems now confronting the world. Real peace depends today on the rapidity with which a third front is created, on the rapidity with which revolutionary workers all over the world regain their political autonomy and resume the struggle to overthrow capitalism. This third front did once actually exist in the form of a revolutionary Russia and of militant workers' parties elsewhere, but at present it exists only in potentiality.

Do you, as an anti-fascist, look forward to, and favor, a war as the quickest means of overthrowing the present regime in Italy?

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Personally, I do not share the opinions of many of my fellow political emigrés. A "liberty" brought to Italy and Germany by foreign armies would be nothing less than disastrous. However, I do not deny that it would be easier to create revolutionary situations in Italy and Germany during a war, but these situations would have to be exploited by Italian and German revolutionaries themselves, and by no one else.

What, in the light of their relations to political parties, do you think should be the role of revolutionary writers in the present situation?

Although until 1930 I was a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party, at present I do not belong to any political organisation. I do, however, consider myself an anti-fascist partisan in the civil war that is now being waged more or less throughout the world. As an anti-fascist partisan, I believe that the true function of the revolutionary writer today is to herald and, so to speak, to represent in its ideal state that third front to which I just referred. This means that the revolutionary writer must risk isolation. For example, there are many writers who have only a superficial understanding of the questions involved in the "collective security" policy, precisely because they believe the Stalinist parties to represent truly the interests of the masses and precisely because they fear the isolation that would result from a break with Stalinism. But today it is necessary to have the courage to stand alone, to risk hearing oneself called Fascist Agent, Hitler spy, and so forth, and to persist nevertheless in one's course. The third front, existing as yet only in an ideal state, must be kept pure as an ideal. And for that too, courage is required.

The reactionary trend of our epoch is shown precisely by the absence of such a "third front." They try to force on us the dilemma: status quo or regression? Most of the progressive forces have already accepted this Hobson's choice. They are content to struggle to preserve the existing order, lest they fall under the fascist yoke.

One thing I must make clear at the outset: I think it would be a serious mistake to put bourgeois democracy and fascism on the same level, in view of the great difference between these two forms

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of political organization. The Stalinists, who until 1934 denied the existence of any such difference and who fought against social-democracy and liberal democracy as the equivalents of fascism, these gentlemen in actuality made possible Hitler's victory.

But it would also be a mistake, through fear of fascism, to turn conservative. Fascism's power, its mass appeal, its contagious influence, all are due to the fact that fascism means false solutions, easy solutions, *ersatz* solutions—but, all the same, *solutions* of the real problems of our time. We can conquer fascism only by proposing and carrying out other solutions—just, humane, progressive solutions of these same problems. But conservative democracy denies the existence of these problems. She does not see them, does not wish to see them, is unable to see them. That is why, in spite of her military strength, her material wealth and her monopoly of raw materials, when conservative democracy is brought face to face with fascism, she is forced back onto the defensive. That is why she has until now been beaten by fascism. That is why she is weak. The democrats are right when they call the Nazi "abolition of unemployment" fictitious, unstable and a stop-gap measure, but their criticism will be more convincing when they themselves find and carry out a healthy and permanent solution of the same problem. It is true that Fascist nationalism conflicts with that peaceful collaboration of all peoples which is a historical necessity, now that the economic integration of the globe has laid the foundation for a progressive world-unity. But the Versailles system is also based on nationalism, it too is opposed to historical development, and so it cannot be set up as an effective barrier against fascism. When the socialists, with the best possible anti-fascist intentions, renounce their own program, put their own theories in moth balls, and accept the negative positions of conservative democracy, they think they are doing their bit in the struggle to crush fascism. Actually, they leave to fascism the distinction of alone daring to bring forward in public certain problems, thus driving into the fascists' arms thousands of workers who will not accept the status quo.

In short, I see the struggle against fascism as primarily not a military but a political and social question. We anti-fascists have been beaten by the fascists in political and social spheres; it is cheap to seek revenge in the military sphere. War will not make

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an end of fascism. It is even probable that the first result of war will be the fascistization of the democratic countries.

But don't you think the military defeat of Hitler and Mussolini will inevitably mean the end of their regimes?

I think that the establishment of a truly free regime in Italy or Germany depends entirely on the Italian and German people. If they cannot free themselves, no one else can free them. Freedom cannot come as a gift from a foreign army: to pay for liberty, a people must dig down deep into its own pocket. Obviously, a war can produce certain favorable conditions for revolution. The same conditions can also be produced by cholera, earthquake, famine. But the advocates of liberty have never been the advocates of cholera nor of earthquakes nor of famine, and they cannot any more be the advocates of war, even though they stand to profit by favorable conditions which it may produce. The worst misfortune which could happen to German socialism—which achieved power in 1918 under such unfortunate circumstances—would be for it to regain power after the next military defeat of Germany and as a natural result of the defeat. Nothing worse could happen to socialism than to become synonomous with national defeat.

When you speak of liberty, do you mean socialist *liberty?*

Yes, I think of socialism as an element from now on indispensable to a regime of real freedom—that is to say, of liberties that are concrete and actual, not formal and "constitutional." Big business and political liberty have become incompatible. But I do not see liberty as the necessary, natural and predestined consequence of socialism: I do not consider economics, politics and culture to be as mechanically interrelated as many Marxists seem to. Just as we have very different political regimes growing from the common soil of capitalist production, so too Russia warns us that, on the base of state socialist production, there can arise a culture of cannibals, a culture much inferior to the culture which bourgeois democracy had created. Socialism rids us of one enemy of human liberty, but it can also introduce new ones, unknown to past history. And there is no formula which can protect us from these

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new enemies, no automatic mechanism, no constitutional guarantees. There is nothing, that is, which can force men to be free. Fortunately! Perhaps after I have finished writing the novel I am working on now, I will try to write a "School for Liberty" as a sequel to that *School for Dictators* you already know.

What is your opinion of contemporary left-wing literature?

Left-wing literature? You must admit that the expression is ambiguous. One should reserve the adjectives "left," "right," "center" and their nuances for political parties and their propaganda. However, I understand what you are referring to. There are a few great left-wing writers and there is a left-wing literary industry, nourished by a left-wing literary philistinism which has become especially abundant and vulgar since the Kremlin discovered literature as "instrumentum regni."

Stalinism is really the horn-of-plenty of this literature. Writers find themselves flattered in all their vague aspirations and, into the bargain, they risk nothing. In a society where they were accustomed to being considered merely a luxury, they are now given the illusion of playing a leading role. They are called together in congresses, they sign appeals, they are "popularized." All that is asked of them is that they approve everything the Party does—or at least that they do not disapprove in public. Nothing more!

There are also a good many writers, essentially bourgeois and reactionary in the quality of their writing, who conform to the etiquette of anti-fascism. Their hostility to fascism has this particular quality: they address themselves always to far-distant fascist regimes and have not a word to say about fascism and reaction in their own country. Truly, a platonic and tactful anti-fascism! Their socialist convictions are also strictly export commodities: these writers are partisans of socialism in Russia but not in their own country. They are most eloquent about the victorious revolutions of the past—1789, 1848, etc.—but are silent on the revolutionary tasks of our own epoch. Already this whole left-wing literary industry is going to pieces as the result of the collapse of "popular front" politics.

The true left-wing writers are distinguished by characteristics

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the very opposite of those I have just described. They are, first of all and above all, opposed to fascism and reaction in their own country. They feel themselves bound in sympathy, first and foremost, with the working class and peasantry of their own country, and, through them, with the workers of every country in the world. They submit to no discipline beyond what every honest conscience and sincere thought provides of itself. And so they will tell the truth to every one, at all times, to enemies and to friends, even when the friends do not want to hear disagreeable truths.

Have you read Trotsky's pamphlet, Their Morals and Ours? *What do you think of it?*

The pamphlet has only recently been translated into French by Victor Serge. I have read it, along with a number of critical articles it provoked. The criticisms as well as the pamphlet left me with a painful impression, because of a fundamental evasion. In spite of the limiting title of the pamphlet—a title which might suggest that the author wanted to confine himself to a justification of bolshevist political morality—Trotsky gives the impression, in certain passages of his essay, where he wishes to theorize, that he does not know or does not recognize the difference between ethical standards and moral sentiments on the one hand, and actual morals on the other—though these two concepts are well-differentiated both theoretically and in practice. Trotsky's critics, those I have had a chance to read, add to the confusion. They put a pin through this or that episode in the history of bolshevism and declare: You see! Two thousand years after Christ, and what sort of ethical principles these Asiatics bring us to! But just as there is a difference between Christian morals and the ethical principles of Christianity, there is a similar difference between all morals and all codes of ethics.

I should be hard put to it if I had to list the ethical principles laid down by Lenin. Perhaps he formulated them in some work I don't know about. But, quite apart from any intellectual formulation, it is beyond question that the heroic life of Lenin and his limitless devotion to the cause of socialism were guided by an inward moral intuition into life and society which, as he matured, he buttressed with the concepts of Marxist socialism. In a general

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sense, we can say that socialism has an ethical content which is not to be confused with the morals of socialist parties, even though it more or less contributes to the shaping of these morals.

This way of putting it may not be clear to those who have not thought very much about these matters. Let me give an illustration. We should look for the same relationships between ethics and morals as between a work of art and its beauty. Every authentic work of art is beautiful, but it is not only and not solely beautiful. More often than not, it has been conceived with an end in mind which is useful or educational or amusing or didactic or religious or political or patriotic or humanitarian. A work of art is thus beautiful quite apart from the intentions of the artist, the school, the party, the church or the government which called it into being. It retains its beauty even after the utilitarian ends it was designed to serve have become obsolete. None of us venerate Zeus or Minerva or Apollo, but the ancient statues which represent them still move us with their pure beauty. They have lost, these statues, their original function, and now they are only beautiful. There are certain art critics who dishonor Marxism because, in the name of their sham Marxism, they see in works of art only fortuitous sociological influences. Poor men and indeed to be pitied, poor people who do not know the meaning of beauty!

The same influences shape and deform the ethical ideal of man, whether it be inherited or whether, because of existing conditions, it includes the need for reform or revolution. That which results and which serves more or less as a guide in practical life, that we call "morals." A valuation of morals which confined itself exclusively to judgments of utility would be inadequate and, in fact, contrary to their nature. Morals must also be considered in relation to the ethical ideal which they embody—or pretend to embody. I consider all utilitarian morality bourgeois and reactionary. Being utilitarian, it is not morality. It is a theory which is helpful in criticising the decadence of the bourgeois order, but it is entirely inadequate for the construction of a new society. That is to say, it becomes the opposite of utilitarian. A socialist movement which, in order to win and keep power more easily, makes hay of the ethical principles of socialism, is doomed to see the chief springs of its vital force dry up. Behind the mask of the most democratic constitution in the world, the new society without pri-

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vate property will be ruled by the ancient law of the forest: *homo homini lupus.*

What are, in your opinion, these ethical principles of socialism?

I want to tell you what I have learned and felt in my contacts with socialist workers and peasants, with men who during the war chose to go to prison rather than to bow to the cult of patriotism, with men who were ruined because of their opposition to fascism, with men who had conquered all fear in themselves—fear of hunger, fear of being tortured, fear of death. I felt in them a complete reversal of all bourgeois values, a strong feeling that men come before money, a feeling of detachment from all considerations of career, family, advancement, a condemnation of capitalist society based on hate, on fear, on a sense of injustice, and a constant application of moral criteria in their judging of technical and economic data. Remember, I am speaking of Marxist workers. All this I learned from them in friendly chats, for they did not open their mouths in public meetings, considering themselves too stupid. Above all, I sensed in them a great feeling of fraternity.

Obviously, in the history of philosophy and of ethical ideals, these poor workers have contributed nothing new or original. I must even add that, as a rule, their ethical ideal seems to be rather antiquated. But among these workers the old Christian message of equality and fraternity has taken on a meaning that is concrete, modern, living—chiefly by the extension of the principles of individual morality to a collective morality, and by their insistence on a just reorganization of society. In the various countries I have lived in, I have tried to know the socialist movement, by forming friendly ties with workers. After feeling my way a little and after getting over the reserve which every man naturally feels when it is a matter of confessing the secret of his own life, I found that for every socialist worker, for every Marxist worker the strongest base for his socialist faith was the sentiment of justice. I am convinced that in justice lies the greatest power of socialism, and that because of it socialism will survive the present crisis.

To seek out the moral content of socialism is equivalent to plumbing the inward and immanent truth of the socialist movement. The "ought to be" is comprised in the "being." The mistake

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of moralists and idealists is to wish to attribute to the movement principles which are alien and strange to it. The mistake of the "vulgar" Marxists is to go no farther than the surface of the movement, thus fragmenting reality by seeing spiritual activities as simple reflexes of economic action. Finally, there is something even worse than "vulgar" Marxism, and that is a certain "tactical morality" of the Stalinists, who, while still believing that Justice, the Dignity of Man, and Truth are petty-bourgeois illusions, have ended up by taking them into their vocabulary "to help in the struggle against fascism"! A stupid Machiavellianism which isn't worth thirty cents!

Socialism does not need to lie in order to give itself a morality. Its moral content lies in its insistence that man comes before nature and industrial technique, and in its demand for a society where this primacy of the *human* shall be assured. *Socialism is not technocracy, but rather anthropocracy.* The distinction of Marx is that he demonstrated that such a revolution, from technocracy to anthropocracy, has been made historically possible (not inevitable, for nothing is inevitable) by the development of capitalist society, and that this revolution would be, in our epoch, in harmony also with the requirements of technological progress.

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Art Chronicle

Recent Tendencies in Europe

CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT has usually been regarded as a happy by-product of national peace and security. On this assumption it might be supposed that nothing could prove more dislocating to the progress of art-movements than a general world war. The years 1914-18 were to show, however, that when an esthetic evolution has been fertilized by an expanding creative instinct, not even the proximity of the conflict itself will entirely restrict its advance. The outbreak of the last war came at the height of what Apollinaire had called the heroic period of Cubism. It was probably luck which proceeded to spare the leading painters (more generously than the writers, for instance), many of whom underwent service in the trenches, but what never ceases to astonish is the high quality of work to come down to us from the years 1915, 16, and 17. Naturally the output was very much curtailed. Yet the impressive war-records of Braque, Léger, and de la Fresnaye among others, did not preclude them from the production of important paintings during brief periods of leave from the front.

The continued evolution of the modern movement would hardly have been possible had the Great War come a decade earlier. The painters were indeed fortunate in having transcended the first feverish years of experiment. By 1914 the new paths that they were to follow were thoroughly open and secure; thus the works of the Cubist painters (both Frenchmen and non-combatants like Picasso and Gris who were immersed in the war-atmosphere of northern France) could appear quite different in character from what the external conditions might normally lead one to expect. One would have prophesied results notable for their violent projection of horror and confusion. Yet the nightmare which attended the creation of the war-pictures seems to have directed them toward a realization which was, if anything, more internal and considered than ever before. It may be that an envel-

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oping chaos imposes upon the artist a new demand for order. We can perhaps thus account for the strongly-built Byzantine esthetic which attended the break-up of the Roman Empire.

As soon as the pressure of the last world-conflict was relaxed, the artists who had persevered received a very prompt reward. With a surprising swiftness the new directions in painting, sculpture, and architecture began to reach sections of the public that had been hitherto quite closed to any esthetic advance. In Moscow the Russian constructivists continued their work, and were considerably encouraged by the new régime. Germany and Austria, although economically wrecked by the war, began the most productive period they had shown in modern times; while in Paris the important painters and sculptors were very soon achieving results that have probably remained the finest of the Twentieth Century to date. (The *Three Musicians* of Picasso is dated 1921.) Abstract movements likewise developed in Poland, Italy, Switzerland, and Holland. It is interesting to note that England and America, who emerged from the war as the dominant world powers, failed to react creatively, until after the world depression had set in, to anything more daring than an occasional expressionist hang-over.

The end of the last decade introduced a new and pervasive insecurity, which was accompanied in the art-world by a gradual shift in its center of gravity. A culture which might survive actual war-conditions is powerless to combat the forces which precipitate war, as most tellingly expressed by the new European dictatorships. Gabo and Pevsner had started the westward drift early in the last decade, when they left Moscow for Berlin. The German artists and their elaborate educational systems were dispersed in 1933. The outbreak of the present war found the movement which had so swiftly spread eastward throughout Europe, backed down at last upon London and Paris. And even in these once open-minded capitals the repeated crises had begun to dull the public's receptivity to any serious art at all. People were in a condition to tolerate only pictures that might with slight effort distract for a moment; they craved no more plastic interest than could be provided by Dufy, Rouault, and the Surrealists.

Many artists, however, have managed to retain their integrity. And there have been compensations. The abstract movement has become clarified as the painters, in default of a public, have

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grown increasingly dependent upon each other; while lack of remuneration, coupled with the rise of surrealism, has been quick in purging the ranks of many who had once pursued non-objectivity for the amusement of the bourgeois gallery-goers. In London, where the plastic arts have rarely in history passed the bounds of literary over-meanings, the sturdy remnants of the abstract movement have become integrated into an intensity that could not have been foreseen a decade ago. The presence of Gabo and Mondrian has provided the most uncompromising leadership now available; and of the native painters, Ben Nicholson succeeds in expressing the genuinely English response to spatial combinations that has lain dormant since the Georgian architecture of Wren and Inigo Jones. Many other British artists have already made contributions to the London School, notably Stephenson, Jackson, and the sculptress Barbara Hepworth.

The Paris scene exhibits an equally striking reorientation, marked by the waning influence of the Cubist pioneers upon the younger generation. It is indeed rare to find still practicing artists who have been retired so securely behind the nimbus of 'old-mastership.' Of the contemporaries of Picasso, Léger, Braque, and Delaunay, it is the sculptors, those who are shaping their esthetic out of actual materials,—Gonzalez, Pevsner, Brancusi,—who have most to teach through their present work. Of the next generation, Arp has at last stepped entirely through the dada and surrealist stages that he once helped to create, into an abstraction that he approaches with a new economy of means. Hartung incorporates a sensitive calligraphic ease in both painting and sculpture, which has brought back the 'touch' that had been the life-blood of Cubism, and that the Constructivists had rejected in their zeal for rivalling manufactured objects; Magnelli has in Paris mastered an almost classical balance which strongly opposes the superficial Futurist mêlée usually designated as Italy's contribution to modern art; and Hélion, who has more than any one, perhaps, influenced the younger generations of Paris, London, and New York, returns from his two years in America, not to show the fruits of his sojourn amid new surroundings, but to take his place on the Maginot Line.

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS

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Avant-Garde and Kitsch

Clement Greenberg

ONE AND THE SAME civilization produces simultaneously two such different things as a poem by T. S. Eliot and a Tin Pan Alley song, or a painting by Braque and a *Saturday Evening Post* cover. All four are on the order of culture, and ostensibly, parts of the same culture and products of the same society. Here, however, their connection seems to end. A poem by Eliot and a poem by Eddie Guest—what perspective of culture is large enough to enable us to situate them in an enlightening relation to each other? Does the fact that a disparity such as this within the frame of a single cultural tradition, is and has been taken for granted—does this fact indicate that the disparity is a part of the natural order of things? Or is it something entirely new, and particular to our age?

The answer involves more than an investigation in aesthetics. It appears to me that it is necessary to examine more closely and with more originality than hitherto the relationship between aesthetic experience as met by the specific—not generalized—individual, and the social and historical contexts in which that experience takes place. What is brought to light will answer, in addition to the question posed above, other and perhaps more important ones.

I.

A society, as it becomes less and less able, in the course of its development, to justify the inevitability of its particular forms, breaks up the accepted notions upon which artists and writers must depend in large part for communication with their audiences. It becomes difficult to assume anything. All the verities involved by religion, authority, tradition, style, are thrown into question, and the writer or artist is no longer able to estimate the response of his audience to the symbols and references with which he works. In the past such a state of affairs has usually resolved itself into a

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motionless Alexandrianism, an academicism in which the really important issues are left untouched because they involve controversy, and in which creative activity dwindles to virtuosity in the small details of form, all larger questions being decided by the precedent of the old masters. The same themes are mechanically varied in a hundred different works, and yet nothing new is produced: Statius, mandarin verse, Roman sculpture, Beaux Arts painting, neo-republican architecture.

It is among the hopeful signs in the midst of the decay of our present society that we—some of us—have been unwilling to accept this last phase for our own culture. In seeking to go beyond Alexandrianism, a part of Western bourgeois society has produced something unheard of heretofore: avant-garde culture. A superior consciousness of history—more precisely, the appearance of a new kind of criticism of society, an historical criticism — made this possible. This criticism has not confronted our present society with timeless utopias, but has soberly examined in the terms of history and of cause and effect the antecedents, justifications and functions of the forms that lie at the heart of every society. Thus our present bourgeois social order was shown to be, not an eternal, "natural" condition of life, but simply the latest term in a succession of social orders. New perspectives of this kind, becoming a part of the advanced intellectual conscience of the fifth and sixth decades of the nineteenth century, soon were absorbed by artists and poets, even if unconsciously for the most part. It was no accident, therefore, that the birth of the avant-garde coincided chronologically—and geographically too—with the first bold development of scientific revolutionary thought in Europe.

True, the first settlers of Bohemia—which was then identical with the avant-garde—turned out soon to be demonstratively uninterested in politics. Nevertheless, without the circulation of revolutionary ideas in the air about them, they would never have been able to isolate their concept of the "bourgeois" in order to define what they were *not*. Nor, without the moral aid of revolutionary political attitudes would they have had the courage to assert themselves as aggressively as they did against the prevailing standards of society. Courage indeed was needed for this, because the avant-garde's emigration from bourgeois society to Bohemia meant also an emigration from the markets of capitalism, upon which artists

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and writers had been thrown by the falling away of aristocratic patronage. (Ostensibly, at least, it meant this—meant starving in a garret—although, as will be shown later, the avant-garde remained attached to bourgeois society precisely because it needed its money.)

Yet it is true that once the avant-garde had succeeded in "detaching" itself from society, it proceeded to turn around and repudiate revolutionary politics as well as bourgeois. The revolution was left inside society, a part of that welter of ideological struggle which art and poetry find so unpropitious as soon as it begins to involve those "precious," axiomatic beliefs upon which culture thus far has had to rest. Hence it was developed that the true and most important function of the avant-garde was not to "experiment," but to find a path along which it would be possible to keep culture *moving* in the midst of ideological confusion and violence. Retiring from public altogether, the avant-garde poet or artist sought to maintain the high level of his art by both narrowing and raising it to the expression of an absolute in which all relativities and contradictions would be either resolved or beside the point. "Art for art's sake" and "pure poetry" appear, and subject-matter or content becomes something to be avoided like a plague.

It has been in search of the absolute that the avant-garde has arrived at "abstract" or "non-objective" art—and poetry, too. The avant-garde poet or artist tries in effect to imitate God by creating something valid solely on its own terms in the way nature itself is valid, in the way a landscape—not its picture—is aesthetically valid; something *given*, increate, independent of meanings, similars, or originals. Content is to be dissolved so completely into form that the work of art or literature cannot be reduced in whole or in part to anything not itself.

But the absolute is absolute, and the poet or artist, being what he is, cherishes certain relative values more than others. The very values in the name of which he invokes the absolute are relative values, the values of aesthetics. And so he turns out to be imitating, not God—and here I use "imitate" in its Aristotelian sense—but the disciplines and processes of art and literature themselves. This is the genesis of the "abstract."[1] In turning his attention away from subject-matter or common experience, the poet or artist turns it in upon the medium of his own craft. The non-representational or

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"abstract," if it is to have aesthetic validity, cannot be arbitrary and accidental, but must stem from obedience to some worthy constraint or original. This constraint, once the world of common, extraverted experience has been renounced, can only be found in the very processes or disciplines by which art and literature have already imitated the former. These themselves become the subject matter of art and literature. If, to continue with Aristotle, all art and literature are imitation, then what we have here is the imitation of imitat*ing*. To quote Yeats:

"Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence."

Picasso, Braque, Mondrian, Miro, Kandinsky, Brancusi, even Klee, Matisse and Cezanne, derive their chief inspiration from the medium they work in.[2] The excitement of their art seems to lie most of all in its pure preoccupation with the invention and arrangement of spaces, surfaces, shapes, colors, etc., to the exclusion of whatever is not necessarily implicated in these factors. The attention of poets like Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Valéry, Eluard, Pound, Hart Crane, Stevens, even Rilke and Yeats, appears to be centered on the effort to create poetry and on the "moments" themselves of poetic conversion rather than on experience to be converted into poetry. Of course, this cannot exclude other preoccupations in their work, for poetry must deal with words, and words must communicate. Certain poets, such as Mallarmé and Valéry,[3] are more radical in this respect than others—leaving aside those poets who have tried to compose poetry in pure sound alone. However, if it were easier to define poetry, modern poetry would be much more "pure" and "abstract." . . . As for the other fields of literature—the definition of avant-garde aesthetics advanced here is no Procrustean bed. But aside from the fact that most of our best contemporary novelists have gone to school with the avant-garde, it is significant that Gide's most ambitious book is a novel about the writing of a novel, and that Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake* seem to be above all, as one French critic says, the reduction of experience to expression for the sake of expression, the expression mattering more than what is being expressed.

That avant-garde culture is the imitation of imitat*ing*—the fact itself—calls for neither approval nor disapproval. It is true that this culture contains within itself some of the very Alexan-

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drianism it seeks to overcome. The lines quoted from Yeats above referred to Byzantium, which is very close to Alexandria; and in a sense this imitation of imitat*ing* is a superior sort of Alexandrianism. But there is one most important difference: the avant-garde moves, while Alexandrianism stands still. And this, precisely, is what justifies the avant-garde's methods and makes them necessary. The necessity lies in the fact that by no other means is it possible today to create art and literature of a high order. To quarrel with necessity by throwing about terms like "formalism," "purism," "ivory tower" and so forth is either dull or dishonest. This is not to say, however, that it is to the *social* advantage of the avant-garde that it is what it is. Quite the opposite.

The avant-garde's specialization of itself, the fact that its best artists are artists' artists, its best poets, poets' poets, has estranged a great many of those who were capable formerly of enjoying and appreciating ambitious art and literature, but who are now unwilling or unable to acquire an initiation into their craft secrets. The masses have always remained more or less indifferent to culture in the process of development. But today such culture is being abandoned by those to whom it actually belongs—our ruling class. For it is to the latter that the avant-garde belongs. No culture can develop without a social basis, without a source of stable income. And in the case of the avant-garde this was provided by an elite among the ruling class of that society from which it assumed itself to be cut off, but to which it has always remained attached by an umbilical cord of gold. The paradox is real. And now this elite is rapidly shrinking. Since the avant-garde forms the only living culture we now have, the survival in the near future of culture in general is thus threatened.

We must not be deceived by superficial phenomena and local successes. Picasso's shows still draw crowds, and T. S. Eliot is taught in the universities; the dealers in modernist art are still in business, and the publishers still publish some "difficult" poetry. But the avant-garde itself, already sensing the danger, is becoming more and more timid every day that passes. Academicism and commercialism are appearing in the strangest places. This can mean only one thing: that the avant-garde is becoming unsure of the audience it depends on—the rich and the cultivated.

Is it the nature itself of avant-garde culture that is alone

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responsible for the danger it finds itself in? Or is that only a dangerous liability? Are there other, and perhaps more important, factors involved?

II.

Where there is an avant-garde, generally we also find a rearguard. True enough—simultaneously with the entrance of the avant-garde, a second new cultural phenomenon appeared in the industrial West: that thing to which the Germans give the wonderful name of *Kitsch:* popular, commercial art and literature with their chromeotypes, magazine covers, illustrations, ads, slick and pulp fiction, comics, Tin Pan Alley music, tap dancing, Hollywood movies, etc., etc. For some reason this gigantic apparition has always been taken for granted. It is time we looked into its whys and wherefores.

Kitsch is a product of the industrial revolution which urbanized the masses of Western Europe and America and established what is called universal literacy.

Previous to this the only market for formal culture, as distinguished from folk culture, had been among those who in addition to being able to read and write could command the leisure and comfort that always goes hand in hand with cultivation of some sort. This until then had been inextricably associated with literacy. But with the introduction of universal literacy, the ability to read and write became almost a minor skill like driving a car, and it no longer served to distinguish an individual's cultural inclinations, since it was no longer the exclusive concomitant of refined tastes. The peasants who settled in the cities as proletariat and petty bourgeois learned to read and write for the sake of efficiency, but they did not win the leisure and comfort necessary for the enjoyment of the city's traditional culture. Losing, nevertheless, their taste for the folk culture whose background was the countryside, and discovering a new capacity for boredom at the same time, the new urban masses set up a pressure on society to provide them with a kind of culture fit for their own consumption. To fill the demand of the new market a new commodity was devised: ersatz culture, kitsch, destined for those who, insensible to the values of genuine culture, are hungry nevertheless for the diversion that only culture of some sort can provide.

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Kitsch, using for raw material the debased and academicized simulacra of genuine culture, welcomes and cultivates this insensibility. It is the source of its profits. Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formulas. Kitsch is vicarious experience and faked sensations. Kitsch changes according to style, but remains always the same. Kitsch is the epitome of all that is spurious in the life of our times. Kitsch pretends to demand nothing of its customers except their money—not even their time.

The pre-condition for kitsch, a condition without which kitsch would be impossible, is the availability close at hand of a fully matured cultural tradition, whose discoveries, acquisitions and perfected self-consciousness kitsch can take advantage of for its own ends. It borrows from it devices, tricks, strategems, rules of thumb, themes, converts them into a system and discards the rest. It draws its life blood, so to speak, from this reservoir of accumulated experience. This is what is really meant when it is said that the popular art and literature of today were once the daring, esoteric art and literature of yesterday. Of course, no such thing is true. What is meant is that when enough time has elapsed the new is looted for new "twists," which are then watered down and served up as kitsch. Self-evidently, all kitsch is academic, and conversely, all that's academic is kitsch. For what is called the academic as such no longer has an independent existence, but has become the stuffed-shirt "front" for kitsch. The methods of industrialism displace the handicrafts.

Because it can be turned out mechanically, kitsch has become an integral part of our productive system in a way in which true culture could never be except accidentally. It has been capitalized at a tremendous investment which must show commensurate returns; it is compelled to extend as well as to keep its markets. While it is essentially its own salesman, a great sales apparatus has nevertheless been created for it, which brings pressure to bear on every member of society. Traps are laid even in those areas, so to speak, that are the preserves of genuine culture. It is not enough today, in a country like ours, to have an inclination towards the latter; one must have a true passion for it that will give him the power to resist the faked article that surrounds and presses in on him from the moment he is old enough to look at the funny papers. Kitsch is deceptive. It has many different levels, and some of them

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are high enough to be dangerous to the naive seeker of true light. A magazine like the *New Yorker*, which is fundamentally high-class kitsch for the luxury trade, converts and waters down a great deal of avant-garde material for its own uses. Nor is every single item of kitsch altogether worthless. Now and then it produces something of merit, something that has an authentic folk flavor; and these accidental and isolated instances have fooled people who should know better.

Kitsch's enormous profits are a source of temptation to the avant-garde itself, and its members have not always resisted this temptation. Ambitious writers and artists will modify their work under the pressure of kitsch, if they do not succumb to it entirely. And then those puzzling border-line cases appear, such as the popular novelist, Simenon, in France, and Steinbeck in this country. The net result is always to the detriment of true culture, in any case.

Kitsch has not been confined to the cities in which it was born, but has flowed out over the countryside, wiping out folk culture. Nor has it shown any regard for geographical and national-cultural boundaries. Another mass product of Western industrialism, it has gone on a triumphal tour of the world, crowding out and defacing native cultures in one colonial country after another, so that it is now by way of becoming a universal culture, the first universal culture ever beheld. Today the Chinaman, no less than the South American Indian, the Hindu, no less than the Polynesian, have come to prefer to the products of their native art magazine covers, rotogravure sections and calendar girls. How is this virulence of kitsch, this irresistible attractiveness, to be explained? Naturally, machine-made kitsch can undersell the native handmade article, and the prestige of the West also helps, but why is kitsch a so much more profitable export article than Rembrandt? One, after all, can be reproduced as cheaply as the other.

In his last article on the Soviet cinema in the *Partisan Review*, Dwight Macdonald points out that kitsch has in the last ten years become the dominant culture in Soviet Russia. For this he blames the political regime—not only for the fact that kitsch is the official culture, but also that it is actually the dominant, most popular culture; and he quotes the following from Kurt London's *The Seven Soviet Arts:* ". . . the attitude of the masses both to the old and

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new art styles probably remains essentially dependent on the nature of the education afforded them by their respective states." Macdonald goes on to say: "Why after all should ignorant peasants prefer Repin (a leading exponent of Russian academic kitsch in painting) to Picasso, whose abstract technique is at least as relevant to their own primitive folk art as is the former's realistic style? No, if the masses crowd into the Tretyakov (Moscow's museum of contemporary Russian art: kitsch) it is largely because they have been conditioned to shun 'formalism' and to admire 'socialist realism'."

In the first place it is not a question of a choice between merely the old and merely the new, as London seems to think—but of a choice between the bad, up-to-date old and the genuinely new. The alternative to Picasso is not Michelangelo, but kitsch. In the second place, neither in backward Russia nor in the advanced West do the masses prefer kitsch simply because their governments condition them towards it. Where state educational systems take the trouble to mention art, we are told to respect the old masters, not kitsch; and yet we go and hang Maxfield Parrish or his equivalent on our walls, instead of Rembrandt and Michelangelo. Moreover, as Macdonald himself points out, around 1925 when the Soviet regime was encouraging avant-garde cinema, the Russian masses continued to prefer Hollywood movies. No, "conditioning" does not explain the potency of kitsch. . . .

All values are human values, relative values, in art as well as elsewhere. Yet there does seem to have been more or less of a general agreement among the cultivated of mankind over the ages as to what is good art and what bad. Taste has varied, but not beyond certain limits: contemporary connoisseurs agree with eighteenth century Japanese that Hokusai was one of the greatest artists of his time; we even agree with the ancient Egyptians that Third and Fourth Dynasty art was the most worthy of being selected as their paragon by those who came after. We may have come to prefer Giotto to Raphael, but we still do not deny that Raphael was one of the best painters of his *time.* There has been an agreement then, and this agreement rests, I believe, on a fairly constant distinction made between those values only to be found in art and the values which can be found elsewhere. Kitsch, by virtue of rationalized

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technique that draws on science and industry, has erased this distinction in practice.

Let us see for example what happens when an ignorant Russian peasant such as Macdonald mentions stands with hypothetical freedom of choice before two paintings, one by Picasso, the other by Repin. In the first he sees, let us say, a play of lines, colors and spaces that represent a woman. The abstract technique—to accept Macdonald's supposition, which I am inclined to doubt—reminds him somewhat of the icons he has left behind him in the village, and he feels the attraction of the familiar. We will even suppose that he faintly surmises some of the great art values the cultivated find in Picasso. He turns next to Repin's picture and sees a battle scene. The technique is not so familiar—as technique. But that weighs very little with the peasant, for he suddenly discovers values in Repin's picture which seem far superior to the values he has been accustomed to finding in icon art; and the unfamiliar technique itself is one of the sources of those values: the values of the vividly recognizable, the miraculous and the sympathetic. In Repin's picture the peasant recognizes and sees things in the way in which he recognizes and sees things outside of pictures—there is no discontinuity between art and life, no need to accept a convention and say to oneself, that icon represents Jesus because it intends to represent Jesus, even if it does not remind me very much of a man. That Repin can paint so realistically that identifications are self-evident immediately and without any effort on the part of the spectator—that is miraculous. The peasant is also pleased by the wealth of self-evident meanings which he finds in the picture: "it tells a story." Picasso and the icons are so austere and barren in comparison. What is more, Repin heightens reality and makes it dramatic: sunset, exploding shells, running and falling men. There is no longer any question of Picasso or icons. Repin is what the peasant wants, and nothing else but Repin. It is lucky, however, for Repin that the peasant is protected from the products of American capitalism, for he would not stand a chance next to a Saturday Evening Post cover by Norman Rockwell.

Ultimately, it can be said that the cultivated spectator derives the same values from Picasso that the peasant gets from Repin, since what the latter enjoys in Repin is somehow art too, on however low a scale, and he is sent to look at pictures by the same

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instincts that send the cultivated spectator. But the ultimate values which the cultivated spectator derives from Picasso are derived at a second remove, as the result of reflection upon the immediate impression left by the plastic values. It is only then that the recognizable, the miraculous and the sympathetic enter. They are not immediately or externally present in Picasso's painting, but must be projected into it by the spectator sensitive enough to react sufficiently to plastic qualities. They belong to the "reflected" effect. In Repin, on the other hand, the "reflected" effect has already been included in the picture, ready for the spectator's unreflective enjoyment.[4] Where Picasso paints *cause*, Repin paints *effect*. Repin predigests art for the spectator and spares him effort, provides him with a short cut to the pleasure of art that detours what is necessarily difficult in genuine art. Repin, or kitsch, is synthetic art.

The same point can be made with respect to kitsch literature: it provides vicarious experience for the insensitive with far greater immediacy than serious fiction can hope to do. And Eddie Guest and the *Indian Love Lyrics* are more poetic than T. S. Eliot and Shakespeare.

III.

If the avant-garde imitates the processes of art, kitsch, we now see, imitates its effects. The neatness of this antithesis is more then contrived; it corresponds to and defines the tremendous interval that separates from each other two such simultaneous cultural phenomena as the avant-garde and kitsch. This interval, too great to be closed by all the infinite gradations of popularized "modernism" and "modernistic" kitsch, corresponds in turn to a social interval, a social interval that has always existed in formal culture as elsewhere in civilized society, and whose two termini converge and diverge in fixed relation to the increasing or decreasing stability of the given society. There has always been on one side the minority of the powerful—and therefore the cultivated—and on the other the great mass of the exploited and poor—and therefore the ignorant. Formal culture has always belonged to the first, while the last have had to content themselves with folk or rudimentary culture, or kitsch.

In a stable society which functions well enough to hold in solution the contradictions between its classes the cultural dichot-

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omy becomes somewhat blurred. The axioms of the few are shared by the many; the latter believe superstitiously what the former believe soberly. And at such moments in history the masses are able to feel wonder and admiration for the culture, on no matter how high a plane, of its masters. This applies at least to plastic culture, which is accessible to all.

In the Middle Ages the plastic artist paid lip service at least to the lowest common denominators of experience. This even remained true to some extent until the seventeenth century. There was available for imitation a universally valid conceptual reality, whose order the artist could not tamper with. The subject matter of art was prescribed by those who commissioned works of art, which were not created, as in bourgeois society, on speculation. Precisely because his content was determined in advance, the artist was free to concentrate on his medium. He needed not to be philosopher or visionary, but simply artificer. As long as there was general agreement as to what were the worthiest subjects for art, the artist was relieved of the necessity to be original and inventive in his "matter" and could devote all his energy to formal problems. For him the medium became, privately, professionally, the content of his art, even as today his medium is the public content of the abstract painter's art—with that difference, however, that the medieval artist had to suppress his professional preoccupation in public—had always to suppress and subordinate the personal and professional in the finished, official work of art. If, as an ordinary member of the Christian community, he felt some personal emotion about his subject matter, this only contributed to the enrichment of the work's public meaning. Only with the Renaissance do the inflections of the personal become legitimate, still to be kept, however, within the limits of the simply and universally recognizable. And only with Rembrandt do "lonely" artists begin to appear, lonely in their art.

But even during the Renaissance, and as long as Western art was endeavoring to perfect its technique, victories in this realm could only be signalized by success in realistic imitation, since there was no other objective criterion at hand. Thus the masses could still find in the art of their masters objects of admiration and wonder. Even the bird who pecked at the fruit in Zeuxes' picture could applaud.

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It is a platitude that art becomes caviar to the general when the reality it imitates no longer corresponds even roughly to the reality recognized by the general. Even then, however, the resentment the common man may feel is silenced by the awe in which he stands of the patrons of this art. Only when he becomes dissatisfied with the social order they administer does he begin to criticize their culture. Then the plebeian finds courage for the first time to voice his opinions openly. Every man, from Tammany aldermen to Austrian house-painters, finds that he is entitled to his opinion. Most often this resentment towards culture is to be found where the dissatisfaction with society is a reactionary dissatisfaction which expresses itself in revivalism and puritanism, and latest of all, in fascism. Here revolvers and torches begin to be mentioned in the same breath as culture. In the name of godliness or the blood's health, in the name of simple ways and solid virtues, the statue-smashing commences.

IV.

Returning to our Russian peasant for the moment, let us suppose that after he has chosen Repin in preference to Picasso, the state's educational apparatus comes along and tells him that he is wrong, that he should have chosen Picasso—and shows him why. It is quite possible for the Soviet state to do this. But things being as they are in Russia—and everywhere else—the peasant soon finds that the necessity of working hard all day for his living and the rude, uncomfortable circumstances in which he lives do not allow him enough leisure, energy and comfort to train for the enjoyment of Picasso. This needs, after all, a considerable amount of "conditioning." Superior culture is one of the most artificial of all human creations, and the peasant finds no "natural" urgency within himself that will drive him towards Picasso in spite of all difficulties. In the end the peasant will go back to kitsch when he feels like looking at pictures, for he can enjoy kitsch without effort. The state is helpless in this matter and remains so as long as the problems of production have not been solved in a socialist sense. The same holds true, of course, for capitalist countries and makes all talk of art for the masses there nothing but demagogy.[5]

Where today a political regime establishes an official cultural policy, it is for the sake of demagogy. If kitsch is the official ten-

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dency of culture in Germany, Italy and Russia, it is not because their respective governments are controlled by philistines, but because kitsch is the culture of the masses in these countries, as it is everywhere else. The encouragement of kitsch is merely another of the inexpensive ways in which totalitarian regimes seek to ingratiate themselves with their subjects. Since these regimes cannot raise the cultural level of the masses—even if they wanted to —by anything short of a surrender to international socialism, they will flatter the masses by bringing all culture down to their level. It is for this reason that the avant-garde is outlawed, and not so much because a superior culture is inherently a more critical culture. (Whether or not the avant-garde could possibly flourish under a totalitarian regime is not pertinent to the question at this point.) As matter of fact, the main trouble with avant-garde art and literature, from the point of view of Fascists and Stalinists, is not that they are too critical, but that they are too "innocent," that it is too difficult to inject effective propaganda into them, that kisch is more pliable to this end. Kitsch keeps a dictator in closer contact with the "soul" of the people. Should the official culture be one superior to the general mass-level, there would be a danger of isolation.

Nevertheless, if the masses were conceivably to ask for avant-garde art and literature, Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin would not hesitate long in attempting to satisfy such a demand. Hitler is a bitter enemy of the avant-garde, both on doctrinal and personal grounds, yet this did not prevent Goebbels in 1932-33 from strenuously courting avant-garde artists and writers. When Gottfried Benn, an Expressionist poet, came over to the Nazis he was welcomed with a great fanfare, although at that very moment Hitler was denouncing Expressionism as *Kulturbolschewismus*. This was at a time when the Nazis felt that the prestige which the avant-garde enjoyed among the cultivated German public could be of advantage to them, and practical considerations of this nature, the Nazis being the skilful politicians they are, have always taken precedence over Hitler's personal inclinations. Later the Nazis realized that it was more practical to accede to the wishes of the masses in matters of culture than to those of their paymasters; the latter, when it came to a question of preserving power, were as willing to sacrifice their culture as they were their moral principles, while the former, precisely because power was being withheld from them, had to be

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cozened in every other way possible. It was necessary to promote on a much more grandiose style than in the democracies the illusion that the masses actually rule. The literature and art they enjoy and understand were to be proclaimed the only true art and literature and any other kind was to be suppressed. Under these circumstances people like Gottfried Benn, no matter how ardently they support Hitler, become a liability; and we hear no more of them in Nazi Germany.

We can see then that although from one point of view the personal philistinism of Hitler and Stalin is not accidental to the political roles they play, from another point of view it is only an incidentally contributory factor in determining the cultural policies of their respective regimes. Their personal philistinism simply adds brutality and double-darkness to policies they would be forced to support anyhow by the pressure of all their other policies—even were they, personally, devotees of avant-garde culture. What the acceptance of the isolation of the Russian Revolution forces Stalin to do, Hitler is compelled to do by his acceptance of the contradictions of capitalism and his efforts to freeze them. As for Mussolini —his case is a perfect example of the *disponibilité* of a realist in these matters. For years he bent a benevolent eye on the Futurists and built modernistic railroad stations and government-owned apartment houses. One can still see in the suburbs of Rome more modernistic apartments than almost anywhere else in the world. Perhaps Fascism wanted to show its up-to-datedness, to conceal the fact that it was a retrogression; perhaps it wanted to conform to the tastes of the wealthy élite it served. At any rate Mussolini seems to have realized lately that it would be more useful to him to please the cultural tastes of the Italian masses than those of their masters. The masses must be provided with objects of admiration and wonder; the latter can dispense with them. And so we find Mussolini announcing a "new Imperial style." Marinetti, Chirico, et al. are sent into the outer darkness, and the new railroad station in Rome will not be modernistic. That Mussolini was late in coming to this only illustrates again the relative hesitancy with which Italian fascism has drawn the necessary implications of its role. . . .

Capitalism in decline finds that whatever of quality it is still capable of producing becomes almost invariably a threat to its own existence. Advances in culture no less than advances in science and

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industry corrode the very society under whose aegis they are made possible. Here, as in every other question today, it becomes necessary to quote Marx word for word. Today we no longer look towards socialism for a new culture—as inevitably as one will appear, once we do have socialism. Today we look to socialism *simply* for the preservation of whatever living culture we have right now.

NOTES

[1] The example of music, which has long been an abstract art, and which avant-garde poetry has tried so much to emulate, is interesting. Music, Aristotle said curiously enough, is the most imitative and vivid of all the arts because it imitates its original—the state of the soul—with the greatest immediacy. Today this strikes us as the exact opposite of the truth, because no art seems to us to have less reference to something outside itself than music. However, aside from the fact that in a sense Aristotle may still be right, it must be explained that ancient Greek music was closely associated with poetry, and depended upon its character as an accessory to verse to make its imitative meaning clear. Plato, speaking of music, says: "For when there are no words, it is very difficult to recognize the meaning of the harmony and rhythm, or to see that any worthy object is imitated by them." As far as we know, all music originally served such an accessory function. Once, however, it was abandoned, music was forced to withdraw into itself to find a constraint or original. This it found in the various means of its own composition and performance.

[2] I owe this formulation to a remark made by Hans Hofmann, the art-teacher, in one of his lectures. From the point of view of this formulation surrealism in plastic art is a reactionary tendency which is attempting to restore "outside" subject matter. The chief concern of a painter like Dali is to represent the processes and concepts of his consciousness, not the processes of his medium.

[3] See Valery's remarks about his own poetry.

[4] T. S. Eliot said something to the same effect in accounting for the shortcomings of English Romantic poetry. Indeed the Romantics can be considered the original sinners whose guilt kitsch inherited. They showed kitsch how. What does Keats write about mainly, if not the effect of poetry upon himself?

[5] It will be objected that such art for the masses as folk art was developed under rudimentary conditions of production—and that a good deal of folk art is on a high level. Yes, it is—but folk art is not Athene, and it's Athene whom we want: formal culture with its infinity of aspects, its luxuriance, its large comprehension. Besides, we are now told that most of what we consider good in folk culture is the static survival of dead formal, aristocratic, cultures. Our old English ballads, for instance, were not created by the "folk," but by the post-feudal squirearchy of the English countryside, to survive in the mouths of the folk long after those for whom the ballads were composed had gone on to other forms of literature. . . . Unfortunately, until the machine age culture was the exclusive prerogative of a society that lived by the labor of serfs or slaves. They were the real symbols of culture. For one man to spend time and energy creating or listening to poetry meant that another man had to produce enough to keep himself alive and the former in comfort. In Africa today we find that the culture of slave-owning tribes is generally much superior to that of the tribes which possess no slaves.

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Who Are The Friends of Semantics?

Albert Wohlstetter and M. G. White

MR. S. I. HAYAKAWA in the New Republic of August 2 undertakes to defend semantics. Convinced that its attackers have badly misunderstood this study, he proceeds to a long, very imposing counter-attack on their "primitive two-valued orientation." He says: semanticists do not believe they can save the world; and people who claim they do are guilty of the very linguistic errors semantics is supposed to eliminate. Such errors flow from a "two-valued" approach; we must use a many-valued logic and surrender Aristotle's law of the excluded middle. Another savage survival we must get rid of is the identification of things and their names.

Now these recondite warnings, so we are told, have enormous practical significance. For example, they furnish unique scientific support for institutions of democratic capitalism. We learn that such familiar doctrines as the separation of the judiciary and the legislature are "multi-valued" in orientation. The above is far from a complete account of Mr. Hayakawa's article. The points listed are only those of general importance. They illustrate a widespread tendency which is very influential in contemporary political discussion. Consequently the issues involved are larger than the mere settlement of a debate between Mr. Hayakawa and PARTISAN REVIEW. The bearings of semantics on our day-to-day opinions deserve more serious consideration.

In his eagerness to embrace semantics in general, Mr. Hayakawa has lumped figures of the most disparate abilities and beliefs. The result has been a pernicious blurring of the meaning of 'semantics' although we are promised clarification of that very term. Any heading that covers groups of thinkers so sharply separated as: (1) Chase, Arnold, Jerome Frank, Korzybski and (2) Carnap, Tarski, Felix Cohen, Malinowski, is bound to result in intellectual confusion. What is more, it perpetuates the confusion created by Korzybski and Chase themselves. Like them Mr. Haya-

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kawa reveals an ignorance of the authorities he cites and an extreme technical incompetence in semantics. This does not aid his explanation. It is time that a clear-cut division be made between two groups of people avowedly engaged in this much-talked-of discipline. On the one hand we have certain distinguished logicians and experimental scientists like Carnap, Tarski and Philipp Frank interested in the formal and procedural aspects of inquiry. On the other, Count Korzybski and the authors of the latest best-sellers on the subject. Whatever their individual attainments in the fields of law, journalism, or accounting, Chase, Jerome Frank, and Arnold are admittedly amateurs in semantics. (The case of Count Korzybski is more difficult. He is certainly not a best-seller. However, one should not infer from this that he is a scientist.) The second group has offered semantics as a more or less get-rich-quick scheme for intellectual success in the social sciences. Unfortunately, in the general view they have succeeded. Witness the reception of *The Folklore of Capitalism, The Tyranny of Words* and *Save America First.*

Serious exponents of the study of meaning are concentrated for the most part in the Unity of Science Movement. Predominantly anti-metaphysical, the group aims at an integration of science to be illustrated in the collective project of many scientists, the Encyclopedia of Unified Science. Their work, though it may be of great consequence for social inquiry, has so far been of an extremely specialized character. It has been phrased mainly in the notation of logistic and logical syntax, and has found its major applications in mathematics and physics. One formal work on biology has been done by Woodger, and there are a few programmatic treatments of sociology and economics. As yet neither concrete social investigations nor sound popularizations of the general method. (Nothing like Einstein and Infeld's *Evolution of Physics* has appeared.) These circumstances have left the door wide open for cure-alls. The opportunity has not been lost. We have had many peddlers of semantic panaceas, shortcuts to the analysis of social ills.

But there are no shortcuts that successfully dispense with careful inquiry. Exactly what control over social affairs semantics provides is not clear. Yet the claims *have* been considerable. Korzybski offers one of the best illustrations of this point, though

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it applies equally to all the men we are treating. A few quotations are necessary since this has been questioned:

> ". . . the older systems with their linguistic methods of handling our nervous system led inevitably to 'universal disagreement.' In individual life this led to pathological conflicts with ourselves; in private life to family strifes and unhappiness, and so to nervous disturbances; in national life, to political strifes, revolutions; in international affairs, to mutual misunderstanding, suspicion, impossibility to agree, wars, World Wars, 'trade wars,' ultimately ending in slaughter, general unemployment, and an unnecessarily great amount of general unrest, worry, confusion, and suffering in different degrees for all" etc. (*Science and Sanity*, pp. 45-46.)

The cause found, the solution follows:

> "When all is said and done, one cannot but see, at least as far as the white race is concerned, that a change from an Aristotelian to a non-Aristotelian system must be momentous. Such a change will mark the difference between a period when the mystery of 'human knowledge' was not solved and a period when it has been solved . . . (it) . . . will open a new era . . . of sanity . . . human general adjustment, agreement, and cooperation. The dreams of Leibnitz will become sober reality." (Ibid., p. 52.)

Nevertheless, Mr. Hayakawa, in his eager but confused account denies, (not unequivocally!), "that semanticists believe they can save the world." Korzybski, on the other hand, is confident of saving at least the white part of it. Nor is Korzybski alone. Stuart Chase, with certain self-contradictory qualifications, would also hold that Supreme Court battles, revolutions, wars, etc. are in large part due to confusions in language. They are, so to speak, all *terrible* misunderstandings.

> "Endless political and economic difficulties in America have arisen and thriven on bad language. The Supreme Court crisis of 1937 was due chiefly to the creation by judges and lawyers of verbal monsters in the interpretation of the constitution. They gave objective, rigid values to vague phrases like 'due process' and 'interstate commerce.' Once these monsters get into the zoo, no one knows how to get them out again, and they proceed to eat us out of house and home." (*The Tyranny of Words*, p. 22.)

The explanation of war is a semantic specialty. Thurman Arnold: "Most of the interesting and picturesque wars have been fought not over practical interests but over pure metaphysics." (*The Folklore of Capitalism*, p. 90.) Jerome Frank: "Our own Civil War was a conflict brought on by words." (*Save America First*, p. 418.) Surely if most of our problems are in essence ver-

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bal, one enormous step in their solution would be to clarify the linguistic situation. *This* is the revolutionary way out!

> "The thinking of the American people is in danger of being imprisoned by Ambiguous Words. We are often the dupes of Nouns, the slaves of Substantives. Our capacity to face realistically and intelligently our gravest national problems, is frequently paralyzed by a few terrifying combinations of the Alphabet. We are indeed in need of a devastating attack on a certain Kind of Capitalism—the kind that consists of the tyranny of misunderstood Capital-letter Words. The time has come to Overthrow the Dictatorship of the Vocabulary." (*Save America First,* p. 15.)

These Pan-linguistic assumptions explain the semantic cure-alls. Except for certain modes of expression, neither has anything in common with the discoveries of Carnap and Tarski. And even these expressions have been badly mangled by Chase, Hayakawa, and Frank. It is necessary to be blunt to clear up the current confusion. The essential distinction between the pseudo-semanticists and the analysts they cite is that the former do not use logical analysis as part of the scientific method. Rather they have used badly garbled semantic phrases and the prestige of these great scientists for essentially anti-scientific ends. Their work cannot be considered a genuine application of this new study. It is rather a fad, in the case of Korzybski—a cult. This is indicated by their misunderstandings of even the most elementary points in the theory of meaning. They have perpetrated a series of errors and confusions that have become so current as to be generally identified with the assured results of semantics. We select a few of the outstanding factual errors and erroneous inferences.

1. *"The two-valued versus the infinite or multi-valued orientation."*

This is the battle promoted by Mr. Hayakawa. In one cramped corner, the two-valued corner, we have the savages—PARTISAN REVIEW and Mr. Hayakawa's other opponents—people with the "two-valued orientation" who are handicapped by the belief that a statement is either true or false. In the other corner we have the advance-guard, those who recognize that a statement may be true, or false, or both, or neither, or any of an infinite number of things. Tarski and Lukasiewicz are presented as the mentors of this "infinite-valued" position.

Anyone acquainted with the literature on so-called n-valued

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calculi would find it difficult to decide where to begin setting right Mr. Hayakawa's caricature. For one thing, the subject itself is too complex and specialized for adequate statement in anything but a technical journal. Mr. Hayakawa's treatment is not merely as unintelligible to the general public as, for example, a string of formulae from quantum mechanics. It would be equally mysterious to the creators of the n-valued calculi themselves. First of all it is inaccurate to equate semanticists with non-Aristotelians, opponents of the law of excluded middle. Tarski, in a fundamental monograph on the subject, explicitly postulates that a statement is either true or false, and not both; a two-valued scheme is definitely presupposed. The n-valued logics are nothing like the descriptions of them offered by Chase, Hayakawa, or Korzybski. They are in no sense incompatible with the 2-valued calculus. Actually, it has been demonstrated that the n-valued calculus is completely translatable into a 2-valued one; in short, it has been proven that they are equivalent.

2. *Non-Aristotelianism.*

Mr. Hayakawa is professedly a non-Aristotelian. One would expect a writer on such an important subject as non-Aristotelian logic at least to understand what he is opposing. Mr. Hayakawa's rejection of the two-valued law of excluded middle does not fulfill one's expectations in this regard. Here Hayakawa is no worse than the people he defends. The principle of excluded middle says of two contradictory sentences that one must be true and one false and that there is no third alternative. While some of Mr. Hayakawa's explanations do take it in this sense, his entire account is so foggy that it is hard to see just what middle he is refusing to exclude. For he maintains in one place that the opposition involved is the opposition of 'all' and 'none.' As if anybody ever maintained that either all men are red-headed or none are red-headed and *that no middle ground is logically possible.*

Any elementary text-book, traditional or modern, is at pains to point out that 'all'-statements and 'none'-statements are contraries, not contradictories: both *may* be false. Mr. Hayakawa is not only unable to understand the advances in logic of the last century; it would seem that he is unacquainted with the very first steps in traditional logic: the square of opposition.

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3. *Infinite-valued politics.*

This distortion of a seemingly narrow technical discovery has its political uses. Mr. Chase and his colleagues have drawn some amazing political inferences from the existence of the n-valued logics. They seem to think that this logistic invention has established the error of asserting an 'either-or' sentence where only two alternatives are presented. No one would deny that there are instances where more than two alternatives occur. You frequently can swim, fly, walk, or roller-skate home. But this does not imply, as Hayakawa would have us believe, that there are never circumstances where only two alternatives face us. Sometimes we either sink or swim. This confusion makes a very handsome facade for the well-worn political beliefs of Chase, Hayakawa, et al. The correctness of these beliefs is not in question here. What interests us is the attempt to justify them on purely logical grounds and similarly to reject opposing views. Whether communism and fascism are the only alternatives facing us today, or whether there are many other alternatives, are matters which can be determined only by empirical investigation. They cannot be settled by a high-handed appeal to the n-valued calculus. One cannot refute the so-called extremists of either the left or right merely because they claim that there are less than three alternatives. In the case of Mr. Hayakawa the "multi-valued orientation" is a fancy name for his inability to say 'yes' or 'no.'

4. *The Emotive and the Scientific.*

The distinction between the emotive and scientific aspects of a symbol is a valid one. It has done good service in discussions of language and is generally accepted today. However, some of our semantic friends have converted the distinction into a divorce; also into a device for fleeing serious controversy. They have assumed that if a symbol is emotive it is not scientific, and vice-versa. Thurman Arnold has made a profession of this confusion. And this is taken as the last word on the subject in many contemporary journals. But perfectly scientific statements like "Streptococcus infections frequently result in deaths" may have powerful affective consequences. The purely descriptive word 'fire' when uttered in a jammed theatre can, as has been celebrated by semanticists, panic an audience. It is also true, and equally familiar, that two words

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with the same meaning frequently evoke different emotions. Semanticists have sometimes recognized this last, and inferred illegitimately that meaning and emotional effect are totally unrelated. The result has been very convenient for purposes of argumentation and polemic. If your opponent uses a scientific expression which has an emotional color (and most words do), just refuse to answer. Say his words are emotive. It supposedly follows that they are nonsense, and don't require an answer.* But disputes containing words like 'fascism,' 'communism,' 'capitalism,' are not myths or folklore merely because they arouse men's passions. Many great scientific statements have been very disturbing. The assumption of a divorce between the emotive and the scientific controls all of *The Folklore of Capitalism:* "When we attempt to analyze the actual operation of creeds in society, we discover the surprising fact that their content and their logic are the least important things about them." (p. 21) Precisely because they are creeds or fundamental beliefs we are told to disregard their logic and content. The utterances of economists, radical and conservative alike, are on exactly the same footing as a cry of pain or a bellow of anger. They are merely evidence, to Thurman Arnold, of some internal disorder. For empirical refutation he would substitute a pathology of political beliefs: an elaborate method of calling one's opponents crackpots. This is one of the most effective ways to avoid scientific, political, or economic controversy. An even more effective method is the attack on "abstraction."

5. *High-order abstractions.*

The confusion about abstractions is perhaps the most powerful anti-scientific distortion made by Chase and some of the others. Convinced that the only definitely significant words are those that name *things* like Bossie, Bessie and Rosie, Chase has called words such as 'capitalism,' 'value,' 'unemployment,' 'fascism,' meaningless. They are all much too abstract. "A thing 'capitalism' is not to be found stalking with gigantic hooves and horrid scales over any market place" (*The Tyranny of Words,* p. 274). Nonsense, there is no such animal. Radicals who hate capitalism, hate noth-

*A gross example of this device was the New Republic's dismissal of PARTISAN REVIEW's protest about Hayakawa. The New Republic editors merely returned: "Our readers will notice the semantic sins in the foregoing letter: 'Vulgarizers,' 'popularizers,' 'basic economic and political realities,' 'liberals.'" That was the end of that discussion.

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ingness. No capitalism, no unemployment, no wars, no fascism. No worries. Wonderful! On this same basis Chase rejects all statements of political economists dealing with general characteristics. These are so much blab-blab. For this rejection he claims the support of Einstein, and all of modern physics. Yet the abstractions of physics are of a considerably higher order than those of political economy. The formulae of both classical and modern physics contain some of the most powerful abstractions ever made. Nevertheless we may be reasonably certain that no physicist has ever seen space-time stalking the market place—with or without horrid scales. (Nor, we may venture, have any of them been disappointed.) If Mr. Chase were consistent, and of course he is not, he would not only have to reject physics. Since every significant statement ascribes a property or treats the relation of properties, Mr. Chase would have to reject any statement whatsoever as containing an abstraction, being so much blab-blab. He is left with the final clarity of silence.

But some of us will not be satisfied by silence. Mr. Chase is included here. For this reason he must contradict himself. Contradiction might have been avoided by greater care in using semantic instruments. Our intention has not been to deprecate the importance of semantics. On the contrary both the authors of this article are actively interested in using the results of this discipline. Our objection is rather that Chase et al. have *not* used it.

The task is admittedly an important one. Besides demanding technical facility of some sort, serious semantics will not obviate the necessity for experiment. There are no short-cuts to scientific accomplishment. Mr. Chase, Mr. Arnold, Mr. Frank and Mr. Hayakawa have not advanced social science one whit by their inept exploitation of the theory of meaning. It is important to distinguish their utterances from the science of semantics.

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Rachel's Summer

C. R. Jackson

MY SISTER RACHEL was dead at sixteen. It was a tremendous event in our town, and in our family too, of course; and though it all happened more than twenty years ago, now, I believe I could remember, and set down, every thing that was said or done in our house during those three days between her death and the funeral. Even conversations I can remember; and who was there, of all our relatives and neighbors; and what people wore and how they behaved—during every hour from Sunday afternoon, when the thing happened, till the funeral was over on Wednesday. I well knew that we had all been thrown into the limelight, as it were, by Rachel's death, and that we were the talk of the town. Consequently when I spoke I was careful to speak with effect, and act as people expected me to act, with the proper amount of drama, so that nobody would be disappointed. That is probably why I remember everything so clearly. I was so busy thinking about myself and the impression I made that I didn't have much time to think of Rachel.

It had happened on Sunday, late in October—one of those amazing warm and lovely days that return suddenly, just before winter, to tell us of the end of summer long after summer is ended. In those days people drove out in their cars on Sunday, inviting friends or neighbors for a drive into the country, or to call on someone in the next town. Rachel had been asked to go riding by the Gove family, Wilson Gove and his father and mother; and about three o'clock they drove away, Mr. and Mrs. Gove in the front seat, Rachel and Wilson in back. An hour later, returning to town from nearby Palmyra, the car overturned coming down the East Palmyra hill and Rachel was thrown out and killed.

It was a tragedy in the town for many reasons, and I was old enough to know most of them. Rachel was the only daughter in a family of four boys. She was young, of course, and very beauti-

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ful: people used to stop Mother on the street and tell her how beautiful Rachel was getting to be, and Mr. Brittain the minister would say Rachel was going to be a beautiful woman "almost any day now," wagging his finger at Mother in playful warning; and I myself remember how sometimes I would look at her across the supper table and suddenly think that Rachel—my own sister that I quarreled with so much—was the most vivid and alive creature I had ever seen.—And another reason was that my father had left home that year and his absence made my sister's death a greater tragedy for my mother. The day after Rachel died—that wonderful Indian-summer Sunday—winter descended at once, with a heavy snowfall in the night, so that we looked out in the morning to white lawns and streets, and the sidewalks had to be shovelled, and kids got out their sleds, and chains had to be put on the cars that drove us over Asylum Hill and down to the cemetery that freezing Wednesday afternoon. Mother said it seemed only fitting and proper that winter should come now: summer was indeed over.

The night before Rachel was buried we were taken in for one last look at her, as Mother didn't want us to be around downstairs on the day of the funeral, when the house was filled with inquisitive neighbors and townspeople and all the hundreds of school children who filed in and out of the front room for an hour and a half before the service. We stood around the open coffin, Mother and we four boys and our father, who had come home for a few days just to make things look right, and I remember Mother didn't cry or make a sound as we stood there. The room was heavy with the smell of floral pieces, almost sickish with it. I looked at Rachel, lying so still and beautiful in her white dress with the yellow flowers in it, and all I could think of was Elaine or Juliet, and I wanted to say something about them. A quotation sprang into my mind and I had to hang onto myself hard to keep from saying it:

"Death lies on her like an untimely frost,
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field"

—which is exactly the way it was, but for once I had enough sense to keep my mouth shut. After awhile Mother said, "And now you'd better go to bed, boys. Grandma'll get you something to eat if you want it." We left the room in silence, acutely uncomfortable because our father had begun to weep.

The next night, the funeral over, we were having supper in

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the dining room. There was a neighbor there by the name of Mrs. Kirtle, and our grandmother, father, the four of us boys, and Mother. Mrs. Kirtle had been very busy the past three days doing things for us, running in with hot dishes, ordering this and that for the house, telling callers how wonderfully Mother was bearing up, and taking charge generally. She was a very active woman in the town, and was president of the Garden Club and also of the Shakespeare Club. People said she had been an opera singer in her youth, and there was a picture of her on her parlor wall dressed in a Japanese kimono, with a fan, and paper chrysanthemums behind her ears. It didn't look like her now, but those small beady eyes peeping over the fan were Mrs. Kirtle's all right.

I was looking at a pin Mother was wearing on her black silk blouse and Mother must have thought I was looking at the blouse, because she said, "Don't worry, son. I won't be wearing black after today." She turned to my grandmother and said, "The boys don't like me in black—" and then she began to cry, the first we had seen her cry since Sunday.

My father got up from the table and came around to Mother and put his hand on her shoulder, saying, "That's right, Ellen, let yourself go. It's just what you need."

"Yes, it will be good for you," my grandmother said. "Don't mind the boys."

Mother sobbed on and on, shaking her head from side to side, her fingers held to her temples. Tears fell to the table-cloth and Mrs. Kirtle got up and pressed a handkerchief into Mother's hand. The sobbing continued unabated for it must have been three or four minutes, when Mrs. Kirtle said the thing that made Mother stop crying.

"Think how good it was of God," Mrs. Kirtle said, "to keep Rachel home with you all summer. You must comfort yourself with that, Ellen."

We knew what Mrs. Kirtle meant. Every year since Rachel was a little girl she had spent the summer at grandmother's farm in the Catskills—every summer, from the first of June, till school opened in September. But this year, for some reason that we boys didn't know, Rachel stayed home. Mother had planned to let her go, the same as usual, and all during the spring Rachel had talked about it and looked forward to her summer at Grandmother's farm.

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Then, the last of June, just a few days before she was to leave, Mother changed her mind, saying that Rachel would have to stay home for the summer the same as the rest of us. I remember we didn't think much of it at the time; but I remember, too, that Rachel was hopping mad, at first, and cried a lot when she couldn't go, and cried often during that summer too. It seemed that she changed, then, and became a little older and more grown-up—she acted sort of aloof and thoughtful all the time, and wouldn't play with us the way she used to, or go for hikes into the country with us, as we had been doing since we were little kids—those wonderful hikes that she had always loved before. Or maybe she didn't really change at all and I only say this because of what I know now. I don't know. I only know that though she didn't go away that summer, and so could have gone on more hikes with us than ever, she never went on another hike again. Anyway, when Mrs. Kirtle said that, about God keeping Rachel home with Mother, we knew what she meant, and it did seem right, too. It seemed God must have known what was going to happen and so kept Rachel home for what was to be her last summer. It made me feel kind of good, even, when I thought of this; you could feel almost happy about it, if you wanted to, and it wouldn't be wrong, either.

Mother put her hands down from her head and sat straight up. There was no sob or weeping in her voice now. "It wasn't God who kept Rachel home this summer," she said. "You know that as well as I do, Doris Kirtle."

"Why, Ellen, don't misunder— You know what I mean," Mrs. Kirtle said. "The Lord works in mysterious ways."

I knew the rest of that. "His wonders to perform," it went, because I had heard Mr. Brittain say it during the funeral service and I thought it the most wonderful thing I had ever heard.

"Rachel's summer — Rachel's summer," Mother went on. "That's all I've been able to think of since it happened. That's the whole—"

"Now now, Ellen," interrupted my father. "You mustn't think of it."

"My darling Rachel, and that terrible terrible summer," my mother cried. "If God had had his way, Rachel wouldn't have stayed home. Oh, why didn't I let her go?"

My grandmother got up from the table. "Come on, boys," she

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said. "I think we'd better go upstairs, don't you? Your mother's tired out."

Mother reached up and took Grandmother's arm. "Wait a minute, mama, I want to say something." She looked at us—for quite awhile, it seemed—and then she said, "Listen, boys. Your sister was a wonderful girl. Do you hear?" She nodded, as if answering herself. "A wonderful girl. I want you to remember that." It was a dreadfully solemn moment, I don't know why. My knees were shaking, and then my little brother, who was eight, began to cry.

"Don't cry, son," Mother said. "I only want to tell you—and you to know—what a wonderful girl Rachel was. You must be proud that you had such a sister."

"Never mind, Ellen," my father said. "Look, you're scaring them."

"No I'm not—am I, boys. And some day, when you're older, I want to tell you something about Rachel, something you should know. You're not old enough now, but some day you'll know what a wonderful sister you had."

My grandmother patted Mother's shoulder. "Yes, dear," she said. "They know now, don't you boys? — But look, it's past our bedtime. Come, I'll go up with you."

We went up to bed and for an hour thereafter, and maybe longer, I lay in my bed in the dark, thinking of what Mother had said. I knew all about this I'll-tell-you-when-you're-older stuff. It was Mother's invariable answer to questions that were embarrassing or that she didn't know the answer to. I had heard it ever since I was old enough to ask questions, and now I didn't pay any attention to it anymore. When Mother would say, "I'll tell you when you're older," I knew she was putting me off and also that it didn't matter: sooner or later I'd find out for myself. Like the question about babies. For some years I had been asking where babies came from (Mother has told me that I asked earlier, and more often, than any of the other children) and she would answer, "You're too young. I'll tell you when you're old enough to know." Maybe it was wrong of her not to tell me, but at least she didn't give me those silly answers about storks and things, that other boys' mothers gave them. I was answered, and I guess it was as good a way as any.

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So now when she said this about Rachel, I didn't think of it much, believing it was just another one of those things that I'd discover for myself before Mother got around to it. I didn't even thing of it at all. Instead I lay thinking of something else that Mother had said: "Your sister was a wonderful girl. I want you to remember that."

I'd remember it, all right. I'd never forget it. I was well aware of Rachel's distinction, both in the town in general and in our own house. She was easily the outstanding member of the family, everybody noticed her all the time, everywhere, and I remember my mother used to say that she got tired of being known simply as "Rachel's mother" when people stopped her on the street and said "You're Rachel's mother, aren't you" and went on to tell her how proud she must be to be the mother of such a wonderful girl. She *was* wonderful, but I knew many reasons why she was wonderful that my mother didn't know at all.

I knew that downtown when boys whistled at her, boys from the other side of the canal, Rachel didn't get cross or blush or look away or stick up her nose and refuse to notice, the way other girls did. Instead, Rachel would look up and see who it was had whistled, and smile right back, and even wave, maybe. They thought this was swell, and I did too. — I knew that when all we kids went on a hike into the country, even though there were boys in the bunch, and some of us almost as old as she was, Rachel was the one who would be first to go into a field where there was a cow that might be a bull. We'd all stand on the outside of the fence, looking into the field, but Rachel would climb right over, the first thing, and go right up to the cow and pat it or hand it some grass, and then when we saw that it was all right, we'd climb over too. I don't know whether or not she always knew, but anyway she wasn't afraid.

And then there was another thing I knew that Mother didn't know and I was glad she didn't. Rachel told a lie once and all of us knew that it was a lie but Mother, who wasn't sure. That was a couple of years before, when Rachel was about thirteen or fourteen. Mother thought maybe it was a lie but she didn't have proof, and so she asked Rachel if she would swear on the Bible that she was telling the truth. Rachel said yes, she would. Mother said, "All right, bring me the Bible." We kids were all scared to death—

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all of us, that is, but Rachel. She walked right into the dining room and got the Bible from the lower shelf of the sideboard and brought it to Mother. Mother asked Rachel if she knew the seriousness of what she was doing and Rachel said yes. Mother took the Bible and set it in her lap. Then she said, "Put your hand on this and swear that you're telling me the truth." I almost didn't dare look, but I had to. Rachel put her hand right on the Bible, looked straight at Mother, and said, "I swear." There was a terrible silence. I think Mother was scared too. She looked it. Or maybe not scared, but something like it—worried, maybe. "You swear what," she said. "I swear I'm telling the truth," said Rachel. Mother looked back at Rachel for a minute and then she sighed, probably glad that it was over. We were. Then she said, "All right, you can put it back now." Rachel took the Bible from Mother's lap and walked back to the dining room with it, looking just as she had before. There had been no lightning or thunder or anything, and she hadn't changed a bit.

These are the things I was thinking of as I lay in bed that night after the funeral. But only for a little while, because then I remembered that tomorrow I was going back to school and I was glad. I looked forward to that, seeing all the kids and having them see me. I was a hero, kind of, and they would all pay a lot of attention to me. I mean there had been a death in the family and everybody knew it, and all the school kids, and the teachers too, would want to look at me and watch me and see how I acted. Only the day before, when I was returning some dishes to Mrs. Kirtle's house, I met one of the kids who lived up the street and he stopped and wanted to talk with me. He stood there on the sidewalk looking at me in a funny way, and then he said: "I saw something on your front door when I came home from school yesterday." There was a kind of gleam in his eye, and he was almost grinning. "It's still there," he said. I didn't say anything and he kept on staring, peering at me closely as if he expected me to do something. I turned and walked on. "I guess it won't be there tomorrow," he called after me, as I went into Mrs. Kirtle's house.

We kind of pretended the next day that we didn't want to go back to school. Mother said it was customary for children to stay home a week when there had been a death in the family, and we could have, too, and it would have been all right with our teachers,

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but she said we must return to school the day after the funeral because she wanted us all to get back to normal as soon as possible, just as if nothing had happened. So we did. But it wasn't as if nothing had happened, of course.

One morning about a week later the teacher called me up to her desk and asked if I didn't want to look at a certain book she had, with beautiful colored pictures in it. I said yes and thank you and started to take it back to my seat. She said, "No, sit here and look at it, at my desk;" and because it was an honor to sit at the teacher's desk I sat down feeling proud and began to look at the pictures, all the while thinking this was just part of her being extra nice to me, as she had been all week, ever since I came back. Then I began to realize that something was happening in the room. The kids were all completely still, there wasn't even any whispering, and out of the corner of my eye I saw that something was being passed from seat to seat, up one row and down another. "See, isn't *this* a nice one," the teacher said, leaning over my shoulder and pointing to one of the pictures. I looked at it, wondering what was happening in the room, what was going on. And then, somehow, I knew. It was the card of thanks that Mother had had printed and mailed to all the people who'd sent flowers when Rachel died, and of course one had been sent to each class in school. Now it was being passed around the room for the kids to read. I knew then why everyone was so solemn and quiet, and why each one of them looked up at me as he finished reading the card and passed it on to the next one. I pretended I didn't know, though, and after a minute I turned away from the book as if I had lost interest in it and looked out of the window, staring into the sky with a sad faraway look till the business of passing the card was finished and the teacher said it was now time to take up geography.

This was the sort of thing that happened often after the funeral, a lot of things like that the first few months, and longer, even, so that for years afterward we were always kind of conspicuous because of Rachel's death, and treated with special kindness by people, or special attention. Most of all we were noticed by Mr. Brittain, our minister, who always stopped us kids in the street whenever we met him and wanted to talk with us. He would stand there for some time, holding our hands and asking how Mother was and how we were, though he must have seen us only a few days

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before at Sunday school and saw us regularly every week there. This was the more odd because Mother, for some strange reason, had given up going to church after Rachel died, and never went again. I thought it was maybe because seeing Mr. Brittain up in the pulpit reminded her too much of the funeral and Rachel; and I thought so all the more when one afternoon, some months later, Mr. Brittain called at our house and Mother asked me to answer the door and tell him she wasn't home. She didn't want to see him again, and as far as I know she never did. At least she didn't go to church anymore and after a couple more trys he never called on Mother again.

All this is so long ago that it seems something I have heard about rather than lived through. When I go home now it is hard to tell whether I really remember these things or whether I just know about them from Mother. It is still the same town in many ways, and in others it is different; but when I go home I am only conscious of the town as it used to be when I lived there, and of the things that happened then. Mr. Brittain isn't there anymore but Mrs. Kirtle is—still living up the street, still as busy as ever: a little old white-haired lady running around the neighborhood doing things for people, managing the affairs of sick ones, and taking charge generally as she always did. And down below Asylum Hill is the cemetery where Rachel lies buried: a lovely spot, grown up now with rose bushes and shrubbery, quite different from the time when we first bought the lot in what was then called the "new part" of the cemetery and Mother used to mind it so much, because the "new part" was all barren and unplanted and very forsaken-looking compared to the "old part."

The last time I was home I was going through an old desk drawer, looking at papers and photographs I had long since forgotten, when I came upon something that made me laugh with delight. It was a note, on ruled paper, written in a childish but plain hand—a note my sister had written to someone in school and which had been passed back to her, with an answer. What delighted me was the postscript that Rachel had added. It read: "Have you heard that Kathleen McMahon is in a fix. *You know what I mean.*"

My mother was sitting near me, sewing, and when I laughed she said, "What have you found now?"

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I said, "It's a note Rachel wrote to somebody. Listen," and I read it aloud.

I saw Mother smile, but she said, "What's so funny about that?"

"Oh, I don't know," I said. "It just seems funny after all these years. I didn't have any idea that Rachel would know—" I stopped, not knowing how to explain what I meant, and added: "She was a wise kid, wasn't she."

After a moment Mother said, "Yes, she was."

I was pleased, somehow, with the whole thing. I liked the idea of knowing that Rachel was—well, sophisticated. It made her kind of a contemporary, less a girl who had been dead more than twenty years—and it made me know her and understand her better too, in a way that I couldn't have known her when she was alive at sixteen and I was three years younger. "If Rachel had lived," I said, "she'd probably have married in a year or two and be the mother of twenty kids by now."

"Probably," Mother said.

"Either that, or been married and divorced ten times over."

"What makes you say that," Mother asked.

"Nothing, except that's the kind of person she was, or would have become. She was so full of life—so *ready* for life, wasn't she. Just waiting for it."

Mother said nothing. I folded the note and stuck it back in the drawer. "It seems such a pity that that wonderful vitality, that wonderful *talent* for life, couldn't have been used, somehow. Because that's what it was, a real talent," I said. "Gosh, God doesn't order things very well, does he, when he permits such waste."

Mother went on sewing for awhile and then, without looking up, she said, "Are you asking me something?"

I didn't know what she meant and I said so.

"Are you trying to find out something, son? Have you ever heard anything?"

"Mother," I said, "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Well, then," Mother said, "I'll tell you."

I was so surprised by all this that I was uncomfortable. I felt as though I had intruded in some way. I knew I had stumbled upon something I had no right to know, and I wished I hadn't. But there

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was no going back now. Mother wanted to tell me, and I passionately wanted to know, even though I honestly wished it hadn't happened.

Mother told all that she had to say in a quiet voice, unemotional, unmoved by the story—not so much telling it, it seemed, as merely reminiscing out loud. She went on with her sewing, and only stopped her recital when she laid aside a piece of work to pick up another, or when I, occasionally, interrupted her.

"Do you remember when Rachel died," she said, "I told you boys there was something I would tell you someday, something about Rachel, something you all should know."

I remembered, now. I remembered the supper after the funeral, and Mrs. Kirtle there, and the black silk blouse of my mother, and her saying this. I remembered how solemn and scared we were and how my brother began to cry when Mother said we were too young to know, now, what a wonderful sister we had, but someday— My poor funny Mother! At thirty-some, I was, apparently, at last old enough.

"Rachel didn't go to your grandmother's that summer before she died," Mother said, "and I think I should tell you why. Do you remember that she didn't go, and that she always had gone before, every summer? But maybe you don't. That's a long time ago."

"I remember," I said.

"She was going to go, the same as always," Mother said, "but a few days before she was to leave, something happened. I'll tell you as plain as I can, though it may be difficult."

"Don't, Mother, unless you really want to," I said. "It doesn't make a bit of difference."

Mother paid no attention to this but went on as if she hadn't heard me. "You children had gone off into the country for the day, on one of your hikes, you boys and Rachel and I think the two O'Connell children and the Lincoln girl. Yes, I know that Helen Lincoln was along too. After you had gone, I lit the gas under the heater to take a bath, rather glad to have the house to myself for the day, and just as I was going to get into the tub, the 'phone rang. It was Mrs. Kirtle. She asked if I was alone and I said yes. She said she wanted to come right over, she had something to tell me. I told her why didn't she wait till later, as I was going to take a

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bath now, but she said no, she had to come right away, it was very important. So she came."

I could see Mrs. Kirtle hurrying over from her house, I could even hear her high little voice on the 'phone, but more than that, I saw all us kids on our hike and I remembered the very day: the hot dry road over Asylum Hill and down past the cemetery to the brook, and how we left the road there, and followed the brook through the fields to our favorite place up further where it was deep enough to swim.

"Mrs. Kirtle told me her news right off, without preliminaries," Mother went on. "Rachel was in trouble—she said it just like that. It came so sudden that I couldn't believe it at first or take it seriously, because Mrs. Kirtle was so excited about it. I said how can you possibly know any such thing, and she said that Mr. Brittain had told her about it and had asked her to tell me—I ought to know about it, he had said. I began to understand, then, what she was saying—the seriousness of it, I mean—and asked her to tell me the whole story. I can't tell you how thankful I was that you children were away at the time. It's funny, but it seemed I couldn't wait for Rachel to come back, I would die of anxiety—and yet I dreaded it too. I knew that when I spoke to Rachel, or even looked into her eyes, I would know. But you children were away on your hike, and I had to wait."

I listened to the story and it didn't seem real. Much more real was the brook and the big willow tree and the enormous snake we saw there, so big that it seemed it must be Africa, and Rachel said that it was.

"Mrs. Kirtle had heard the story at the Ladies' Aid," Mother said. "During their meeting the day before, Mr. Brittain came in and told a couple of the ladies about it, saying that somebody ought to tell Rachel's mother. He asked which one of them knew me the best, and Mrs. Kirtle said she guessed she did. That's how she came to me. I never did know who told Mr. Brittain, or how the story got started in the first place. When I went to him about it that week, he wouldn't tell me, though I begged him to, and begged him many times that summer. After Rachel was dead, he did come to see me, but it was too late then and I wouldn't talk to him."

Mother was looking down at her sewing, she didn't once look at me during the whole story, and my heart jumped with pity as I recalled that day and knew how it was with her. And all that while,

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we kids were off at the brook, moving in single file along the bank to our swimming place, a mile or more from the road.

"About four o'clock or half-past, you children came down the street," Mother said. "I was sitting in the porch-swing, I hadn't been able to do anything all day, and I was never so glad to see anybody, never in my life, as I was to see you children."

"Mother, I remember," I said, and I did. I remembered exactly, and could see Mother sitting there now, watching for us through the vines.

"Rachel had a big armful of wild iris," Mother said. "Flags, you children called them—white ones and blue ones—and she said she was mad at you boys because you wouldn't bring some home too. I could have had the whole field of them, she said, if you had only helped her."

"I remember, we wouldn't," I said, "I don't know why."

"Rachel was beautiful that day, son," Mother said. "She was only fifteen then, but really she had begun to look like a woman, almost. Maybe she only seemed more beautiful because of the terrible day and what I had to tell her. You'll know what it's like when your own children begin to grow up."

The old phrase—how many times I had heard it, and with what impatience each time. But it was right, it was true, and I was ashamed of my amused tolerance of my mother on many occasions before. "What did you do," I said, to cover my embarrassment, "—how did you tell her?"

"I simply told her," Mother said. "We went upstairs to her bedroom and I asked her to sit down. We sat beside each other on the bed. Rachel saw that my eyes were red from weeping and suddenly she threw her arms about me and said, 'Who's been making my mother cry!' Then I told her what Mrs. Kirtle had said—what Mr. Brittain had said—but I didn't tell her who said these things. I couldn't, though it was the first thing she asked, the very first. 'Who told you,' she cried in rage, 'who said that!' I wouldn't tell her, I didn't think I should."

"Oh, Mother," I said, "you should have, you should."

"Well, I didn't," Mother went on. "I never did, even to the end, though she kept on asking me all summer, almost every day. Anyway, then I said, 'Rachel, is this true, are you in trouble,' and she almost shouted. 'No!' she cried, and I told her she'd have to be more quiet on account of you boys, I didn't want you other

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children to know anything was wrong. Rachel was very angry—you know what a spirited child she was—and kept saying, 'I'll kill them, I'll kill them!' I tried to calm her, and said the only thing that was important was that I should know the truth. And then, between tears and outbursts of anger, Rachel told me the thing that made me know the story was not true. Do you know what it was?"

I shook my head. I didn't know but I couldn't ask, remembering Rachel too well, and remembering, too, the episode of the Bible.

"Rachel said, 'Mother, it isn't true, because listen. Today I couldn't go in swimming. All the other kids went in, every one but me. I didn't because I couldn't. Ask the boys.' "

I could have cheered. It was true, I remembered it perfectly. Thank God for that old-fashioned idea, I thought, and good for Rachel that she knew it. It told Mother without a shade of doubt—and me too, now—that Rachel was telling the truth.

I remembered it all, and said so: how Rachel had sat on the bank waiting for us, while we kids splashed around in the stream, begging Rachel to come in, and calling her a sissy for not doing so. I remembered, too, but didn't tell Mother this, how Helen Lincoln didn't have a bathing suit and went in with her white middy blouse and bloomers, and how her middy got all wet and showed the points of her nipples when she stood up. And I remembered how I tried not to look at her too much, and that I was glad that Rachel, who wore a middy blouse too, hadn't gone in with us after all.

"Mother, for heaven's sake," I said, "why didn't you ask us? It was true, Rachel didn't go in, and we could have told you so!"

"I didn't need to, son," Mother said. "I believed her." She sighed deeply, but went on with her sewing. "Of course the damage had been done," she said. "It didn't matter that Rachel was innocent, the story was around town and the only thing to do, then, was to keep Rachel home for the summer. I wanted to let her go to your grandmother's, as we had planned, but I couldn't. I wrote to your father, asking him what to do, and he wrote back to keep her home, not to let her go away once during the summer, not even for a weekend. And all during that long summer, her last summer, poor Rachel wasn't allowed to go away once, not even in September when the Lincolns invited her to the lake for Labor Day weekend. She had to stay home with me the whole time, and almost every

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day she'd ask who had told me the story, and she'd swear that someday she'd know and that she'd kill whoever it was, or do something awful to them."

"So she should have, too, if she'd known," I said. "But Mother, why didn't you let her go? How could you have cared so much what people said, especially when you knew better?"

"If she went away, people would believe the story," Mother said. "She had gone away to have the baby. But if she stayed home —stayed home long enough— But son, you see—you see, she didn't stay home long enough—"

"What do you mean," I said, "she didn't go away once."

"I mean," Mother said, "you see, Rachel never— No, she didn't go away, but you see, she didn't live long enough, either."

I got up and walked to the window. I didn't trust myself to speak, and I knew I would have to wait quite awhile. I looked out of the window at the street—this street I had played in, it seemed, all my life—and across the way was the house that always resounded to the thumping of a player-piano, and next to it was the O'Connell's house, and next to that was Mrs. Kirtle's neat little home, kept neat and trim and painted for her every year by the son who now lived in New York, the same as I did. What drew us back to this town, anyway, and why did we ever come home? But we loved it too, we who had moved away, and though we never saw each other in New York, we met often at home during the year, in summer vacations or at Christmas time, bored to death through the long holidays, anxious to get away again, and thanking our stars that we didn't have to live here.

"Mother," I said, after awhile, "I'm going out for a walk. I think I'll go over to the library and see what it's like."

"All right, son," Mother said. "But be back in time for supper, don't stop in anywhere. I've got vegetable soup cooking."

"I won't stop in anywhere," I said. I smiled to myself, because I knew that if I did stop in at somebody's house, and be late, Mother would begin calling up.

And then, just as I kissed her goodbye, Mother said, "Son, I want to ask you something before you go out."

"What is it, Mother," I said, "have I got my rubbers on?"

She looked up at me beseechingly. "Is it true," she said, "that Rachel didn't go in swimming that day? Tell me—do you really remember it, or are you just saying that? I've got to know."

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22nd August, 1939

Kenneth Rexroth

". . . when you want to distract your mother from the discouraging soulness, I will tell you what I used to do. To take her for a long walk in the quiet country, gathering wildflowers here and there, resting under the shade of trees, between the harmony of the vivid stream and the gentle tranquillity of the mothernature, and I am sure she will enjoy this very much, as you surely will be happy for it. But remember always, Dante, in the play of happiness, don't use all for yourself only, but down yourself just one step, at your side and help the weak ones that cry for help, help the prosecuted and the victim; because they are your better friends; they are the comrades that fight and fall as your father and Bartolo fought and fell yesterday, for the conquest of the joy of freedom for all and the poor workers. In this struggle of life you will find more love and you will be loved."

Nicola Sacco to his son Dante, Aug. 18, 1927

"Angst und Gestalt und Gebet"—Rilke

What is it all for, this poetry,
This bundle of accomplishment
Put together with so much pain?
Twenty years at hard labor,
Lessons learned from Li Po and Dante,
Indian chants and gestalt psychology;
What words can it spell,
This alphabet of one sensibility?
The pure pattern of the stars in orderly progression,
The thin air of fourteen thousand foot summits,
Their Pisgah views into what secrets of the personality,
The fire of poppies in eroded fields,
The sleep of lynxes in the noonday forest,
The curious anastomosis of the webs of thought,
Life streaming ungovernably away,
And the deep hope of man.

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All the centuries have changed little in this art,
The subjects are still the same.
"For Christ's sake take off your clothes and get into bed,
We are not going to live forever."
"Petals fall from the rose"
We fall from life,
Values fall from history like men from shellfire,
Only a minimum survives,
Only an unknown achievement.
They can put it on all the headstones,
In all the battlefields,
"Poor guy, he never knew what it was all about."
Spectacled men will come with shovels in a thousand years,
Give lectures in universities on cultural advances, cultural lags.
A little more garlic in the soup,
A half hour more in bed in the morning,
Some of them got it, some of them didn't;
The things they dropped in their hurry
Are behind the glass cases of dusky museums.

This year we made four major ascents,
Camped for two weeks at timberline,
Watched Mars swim close to the earth,
Watched the black aurora of war
Spread over the sky of a decayed civilization.
These are the last terrible years of authority.
The disease has reached its crisis,
Ten thousand years of power,
The struggle of two laws,
The rule of iron and spilled blood,
The abiding solidarity of living blood and brain.
They are trapped, beleagured, murderous.
If they line their cellars with cork
It is not to still the pistol shots,
It is to insulate the last words of the condemned.
"Liberty is the mother
Not the daughter of order."
"Not the government of men
But the administration of things."
"From each according to his ability,
Unto each according to his needs."

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We could still hear them,
Cutting steps in the blue ice of hanging glaciers,
Teetering along shattered aretes.
The cold and cruel apathy of mountains
Has been subdued with a few strands of rope
And some flimsy iceaxes,
There are only a few peaks left.

Twenty-five years have gone since my first sweetheart.
Back from the mountains there is a letter waiting for me.
"I read your poem in the New Republic.
Do you remember the undertaker's on the corner,
How we peeped in the basement window at a sheeted figure
And ran away screaming? Do you remember?
There is a filling station on the corner,
A parking lot where your house used to be,
Only ours and two other houses are left.
We stick it out in the noise and carbon monoxide."
It was a poem of homesickness and exile,
Twenty-five years wandering around
In a world of noise and poison.
She stuck it out, I never went back,
But there are domestic as well as imported
Explosions and poison gases.
Dante was homesick, the Chinese made an art of it,
So was Ovid and many others,
Pound and Eliot amongst them,
Kropotkin dying of hunger,
Berkman by his own hand,
Fanny Baron, biting her executioners,
Mahkno in the odor of calumny,
Trotsky too, I suppose, passionately, after his own fashion.
Do you remember?

What is it all for, this poetry,
This bundle of accomplishment
Put together with so much pain?
Do you remember the corpse in the basement?
What are we doing at the turn of our years,
Writers and readers of the liberal weeklies?

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The Poetry of Paul Eluard

Louise Bogan

PAUL ELUARD, one of the original members of the Dada "school," moved into Surrealism, under the leadership of André Breton, when "the Dada anarchy" was outlawed. He has held closely to the tenets of Surrealism through all their hardening and stiffening, in spite of the fact that his gifts seem perfectly opposed to all that Surrealism once stood for, and all it stands for now. The reasons for his alliance with Dada would be somewhat difficult to determine. It was natural, certainly, that a talent like Eluard's—simple and sensitive, quite unclouded by the fumes of the macabre, and undisturbed by the sardonic horse-play and involved cynicism of his sturdier contemporaries—should be forced, during the post-War years, to take on some kind of protective coloring, make some defensive alliance, in order to exist. Such a talent was of the exact kind to move his contemporaries to parody. Eluard's complete complaisance to Surrealist doctrine, before and after Surrealism's alliance with "the revolution," permitted him to go on writing; but his passivity has lapsed, at times, into a kind of masochism, vitiating his work and making his "thinking" ridiculous. He has never rebelled aganst Breton's manifestos and excommunications; he is, in fact, the complete complement of Breton, who has been called the Saint-Just of Surrealism. He obediently became a Communist when Surrealism, the party wedded to complete non-utilitarianism and to the exploration of the wayward subconscious, automatism and the dream, developed a dogma equally unyielding, and in many ways paralleling Communist dogma. Eluard has obeyed, it is true, without once changing his fundamental poetic nature. He stands today in the peculiar position of a poet who has remained a depository of one kind of poetic expression (a kind, as we shall see, which is not particularly French), while paying more than lip-service to doctrines in every way inimical to the development of that expression.

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Surrealism has received little analytical discussion in English. Because it cast back for exemplars through the 1870 generation in France (Rimbaud and Lautréamont), to Baudelaire, it seemed to gather up Symbolist functions, and, moreover, extend them by adding Freudian theory to the Symbolist base. Actually, this widening and deepening never occurred, and Symbolism was contracted rather than extended, by Surrealism. Since Eluard's poetry is so symptomatic of one result of adherence to Surrealist theory, it is necessary to outline briefly the nature of the Surrealist revolt against Dada, and the uneven history of Symbolism (which did not proceed in an unbroken line, as is generally supposed) after Mallarmé.

In 1898 Mallarmé's chief pupil, Valéry, entered the silence which was to remain unbroken for twenty years. And although the influence of Rimbaud was not entirely dead, it was subjected to traditional distortions, chiefly at the hands of Claudel and Rivière, who endeavoured to prove Rimbaud a Catholic character and an embodiment of angelic (though fallen) innocence. A regression toward convention and traditionalism had set in. Marcel Raymond describes it in his *De Baudelaire à Surrealisme:*

> "Writers seemed prisoners of their culture. Psychological or physiological drama, recitals of sociologists, physicians and geographers, poems by archeologists or men of erudition, the literary jests and *divertissements* of mandarins — all these [pre-War] works rested on a base of positive knowledge, considered unshakable and untouchable. Literature was . . . limed in the mass of facts, laws and hypotheses which the remarkable development of human knowledge had heaped up . . . during the 19th century. The great majority of the works of the period proposed to demonstrate something, whether by describing, analysing, explaining individual or collective phenomena, or by decomposing them into rational elements. . . . These works were clear and satisfied the needs of a simple logic. . . . All were determinist or finalist. The creative freedom of the artist could not function except between walls of truth, utility or good sense. . . . Poetry, from the early epoch of Parnassianism, had been towed along behind philosophy and history. Hugo, Leconte de Lisle, Prudhomme and Herédia had wished to condense in their verse a world of ideas and facts. It is true that the Symbolists, coming after the Parnassians, had . . . opened literary windows and allowed the fog of mystery to come into the study of the man of letters. But, after 1895, the Symbolists were violently attacked:

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> neo-classicists . . . wrote erudite poetry. . . . All the writers joined in a common cult of the intelligence: between a poem by Mme. de Noailles and certain pages of the novels of Regnier, between the phrases of Anatole France, Maurras, Barrés, and the poems of Moréas, between the tirades of Paul Adam, the invectives of Mirbeau and certain social poems of Verhaeren, the difference was only one of meter and rhyme. . . .

In this situation, it is interesting to remember, it was foreigners like Rilke and Yeats who received refreshment from whatever feeble sparks of Symbolism remained alive. (Villiers de l'Isle Adam was such a spark. Rilke went back to Baudelaire.)

The birth of Dada coincided with the renovation of the "conception" of the universe, and of the spiritual life, by the scientists whose work, conceived and tested before the War, became generally available thereafter. "Relativist hypotheses made absolute truth recede far beyond the touch of human reason"; the Freudian hypotheses broke down and complicated "the grossly simplified analyses, in the moral field, of the preceding era." Art, always acting as a symptom, and always well before the event (even in its least energetic periods), had already announced the change (Rimbaud, two generations previously). An undercurrent of revolt against officially respectable literature, colored with occultism, interest in the supernatural, the erotic and the sadistic, had begun before the war. Jarry was its chief mystificator. Apollinaire, of Polish blood, born in Rome, brought back into French literature a forgotten interest of the Symbolists: an interest in "popular poetry,"—the literature produced by everyday life. Popular songs and the machines and apparatuses then beginning to change the technique of European living appeared in his poetry more often than the esoteric trappings of the macabre. He rarely tried to elevate his tone to match the sublimity acceptable to French writing. He worked best on the level of wit. He was able "to create an atmosphere wherein the banal, the daily, the threadbare theme was transfigured." He was also capable of true pathos, and it was his wit and pathos which were deleted almost entirely from the Surrealist movement whose name derived from one of his invented terms. "It was things themselves [which interested Apollinaire], happenings which ought continually to become 'the marvelous,' if looked at with a certain bias."

Dada, soon dead and denounced by Surrealism, was, in its

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beginnings, a far more vigorous assault against logic and the weight of bourgeois ideals, than Surrealism, fixed, humorless and from the beginning out for the dead-end effects of madness and mystification. Symptomatic of post-War derangement, hysteria and despair, Dada nevertheless contained elements of control over and insight into its aberrations. Its working resembled the forms of hysteria, but it was the hysteria of an intelligent living entity suffering from shock. It never developed the paranoid symptoms of Surrealism. It was able to laugh at its own jokes, be cynical with its own cynicism and cruel to its own sadism, and its dogmatic and persecutory symptoms were mild, if they existed at all. It found room for Max Jacob's *macaroniques* and bold parodies, and for Eluard's pathos. Surrealism, on its first appearance, immediately showed signs of a sobering up process. It was announced by a call to order, disguised as a manifesto for more freedom. Its championship of automatism, its great show of dives into the depths of the subconscious and flights into the empyrean of *le merveilleux* were accompanied by a reciprocal tendency to law-making, litany-singing, and the issuance of marching orders. Breton's litany on "the marvelous" might be set to four-four time: "*Le merveilleux est toujours beau, n'importe quel merveilleux est beau, il n'y a même que le merveilleux qui soit beau.*"

It would be simple to produce an analogy between the functioning of Surrealism and the mechanisms discoverable in a person suffering from a psychosis. The more the irresponsibility of the "subconscious" is given rein, the more an increasingly rigid and authoritarian set of rules is thrown up, which parallel the workings, in a psychotic individual, of a super ego, or too harsh conscience. The "jacobin and jansenist logic" superimposed upon Surrealism allowed it to remain detached from reality, and worked off the guilt of artists who had reduced their work to a kind of collection of picture postcards or a parlor game. Art, under these conditions, must become more rather than less fixed; its forms become monotonous. The monotony extends to the work of those "rage types" who take it out in invective (Surrealism is rich in these); it shows itself in the reduction of form to the bleak list and the tiresome juxtaposition. Not only is growth impossible, but recession is probable.

Breton and Eluard at one time collaborated in the writing of

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a book of poems which imitated the speech of "victims of mental debility, acute mania, general paralysis, etc." They "hoped," in their notes to these productions, "that attempts to simulate the maladies for which one is usually confined, may one day replace the ballad, the sonnet, the epic. . . ." Breton wished his recitals of dreams to be stenographic, and his approach to "madness, the dream, the absurd, the incoherent, the hyperbolic and all that opposes the summary appearance of the real" is one of "precise experiment." The truth is, that in surrealism, the dream is treated in the most primitive way: it is recounted or imitated; Surrealist poets have gone into the subconscious as one would take a short trip into the country, and have brought back some objects of grisly or erotic-sadistic connotation, or a handful of unrelated images, in order to prove their journey. It has not occurred to them that the journey has been taken many times, that human imagination has, before this, hung a golden bough before the entrance to hell, and has described the profound changes the true journey brings about. It is a journey not to be undertaken lightly, or described without tension of any kind. And the *aller et retour,* if merely approximated, produces approximate expression: the sulphurous, the sadistic, the luxurious macabre, the Grand Guignol; or the childish, fatuous game.

II.

"Give the initiative to words," said Mallarmé, and if this command is followed to its logical conclusion, the subject disappears. It is (or has been) a surrealist pleasure to take the kernel of meaning out of forms into which meaning is most closely compressed. Here are three surrealist proverbs by Eluard and Péret:

Les éléphants sont contagieux
Les cerises tombent ou les textes manquent.
Les grands oiseaux font les petites persiennes

Or the definition. Here are two Eluard "définitions":

Un homme vivant monté sur un cheval vivant rencontre
une femme vivante tenant en laisse un chien vivant.

Une robe noire ou une robe blanche? Des grands
souliers ou des petits?

If the fortuitous brings in (by chance?) a semblance of wit (as it does, certainly, in the above quotations), this wit must be countered by the "fortuitous" poem dull as a flat joke:

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Un grand feu dans la cheminée
Un bon tapis par terre
Quelques chaises autour de la table
Des brosses des charrues des clairons des dentelles

Le tout soigneusement enduit de glu.
(*Cours Naturel*, 1938)

It is plain that Eluard is not perfectly freely "giving the initiative to words"; the element of choice is working, if in a reverse direction. In the two early poems which follow, Eluard's purity of diction, his taste (comparable in many ways to the taste of the Parnassians), and his pathos are evident:

LEURS YEUX TOUJOURS PURS

Jours de lenteur, jours de pluie,
Jours de miroirs brisés et d'aiguilles perdues,
Jours de paupières closes à l'horizon des mers,
D'heures toutes semblables, jours de captivité,

Mon esprit qui brillait encore sur les feuilles
Et les fleurs, mon esprit est nu comme l'amour,
L'aurore qu'il oublie lui fait baisser la tête
Et contempler son corps obéissant et vain.

Pourtant, j'ai vu les plus beaux yeux du monde,
Dieux d'argent qui tenaient des saphirs dans leurs mains,
De véritables dieux, des oiseaux dans la terre
Et dans l'eau, je les ai vus.

Leurs ailes sont les miennes, rien n'existe
Que leur vol qui secoue ma misère,
Leur vol d'étoile et de lumière
Leur vol de terre, leur vol de pierre
Sur les flots de leurs ailes,

Ma pensée soutenue par la vie et la mort.
(*Capitale de la Douleur*, 1926)

("No play with words," Eluard says. "Everything is comparable to everything, everything finds its echo, its reason, its resemblance, its opposition, its transformation. And this transformation is infinite.")

LA NECESSITE

Sans grande cérémonie à terre
Près de ceux qui gardent leur équilibre
Sur cette misère de tout repos
Tout près de la bonne voie

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Dans la poussière du sérieux
J'établis des rapports entre l'homme et la femme
Entre les fontes du soleil et le sac à bourdons
Entre les grottes enchantées et l'avalanche
Entre les yeux cernés et le rire aux abois
Entre la merlette héraldique et l'étoile de l'ail
Entre le fil à plomb et le bruit du vent
Entre la fontaine aux fourmis et la culture des framboises
Entre le fer à cheval et le bout des doigts
Entre la calcédoine et l'hiver en épingles
Entre l'arbre à prunelles et le mimétisme constaté
Entre la carotide et le spectre du sel
Entre l'araucaria et la tête d'un nain
Entre les rails aux embranchements et la colombe rousse
Entre l'homme et la femme
Entre ma solitude et toi.

(*La Vie Immédiate,* 1932)

It is a limitation in Eluard that he is aiming at one kind of poetry and producing another. Loose form and the continually changed image must have beneath them—or rather, must rise from the very existence of—a ground-swell energy, wildness and ferocity in the poet. When the poetic gift is sensitive, and its projection mild, on the other hand, it is form alone which gives edge to its nuances. Eluard is far closer, as Jean Cassou has pointed out, to the German poet's nostalgia and "suffering" than to the French poet's sublimity and lucidity. And he is certainly more close, in nature, to the Parnassians than to Baudelaire, Rimbaud, or Lautréamont in all of whom ferocity is present. The French classic line intersected, in Baudelaire, with the macabre and Gothic; classic form was fused with passionate feeling and imagination and the results are superb and inimitable poems. Rimbaud and Lautréamont charged language with such force that it broke through form; even Hugo's rhetoric was not adequate for these personalities. Even in Mallarmé the reverberation of emotion sounds through his designs for fans, and his preoccupation with his furniture and lace-curtains; the grandeur of glaciers, thunder and rubies invades the poetry from which actual "meaning" has been barred. When Rimbaud wished to express pathos, he immediately and instinctively went back to form (in the poems *Bonheur* and *Chanson de la Plus Haute Tour*, for example). The results of imitating a poet, whose form is distorted because it is bearing more condensed

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meaning and emotion than it can bear, may be observed in the imitators of Hopkins. The tricks are managed, but the true effects not in any way approached.

Emotion, when it rises above pathos, immediately takes on complexity. Eluard, well below the complex level, and attempting to work with the automatic and hallucinatory, at the end is left with his vocabulary (simple, exquisitely chosen), his syntax (also of the simplest), and his one emotional effect: "an amorous and dolorous obsession of an infinitely pathetic character."

Eluard is incapable of the poem of revolt. When he feels that such a poem is required of him, he writes the following undistinguished and adolescent lines:

CRITIQUE DE LA POESIE
C'est entendu je hais le règne des bourgeois
Le règne des flics et des prêtres
Mais je hais plus encore l'homme qui ne hait pas
Comme moi
De toutes ses forces

Je crache à la face de l'homme plus petit que nature
Qui à tous mes poèmes ne prefère pas cette CRITIQUE DE LA POESIE
(*La Vie Immédiate,* 1932)

The kindest of Eluard's critics have warned him against the traditional French affectation into which his writing can so easily be led. He shows this tendency in his comparisons, which are likely to compare something of emotional weight to something pretty or abstract, or charmingly strange. Or delicate attributes are given to creatures and objects of a certain natural energy and strength:

Birds perfume the woods
Rocks their great nocturnal lakes

And it is possible, in Eluard, as in any poet, to detect the faked phrase, put in to make things harder, or to render matters, to the casual glance at least, more profound. All the manifestoes in the world cannot infuse import into "agile incest," or "fishes of anguish." This sort of thing, if persisted in, becomes *mignardise and confiserie.*

Eluard's virtues are apparent, and his influence, if not strong, might be importantly pervasive. His basic naturalness, existing uniquely among his contemporaries, preserves in French literature (at a time when such a delicate ingredient might be entirely lost)

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a *pathétique* equally as valuable as the sublimity, wit, irony, malice and corrosive rhetorical splendors with which that literature has always been so well supplied. Apollinaire combined this pathos with wit; he has moments which go back to Villon. Pathos alone, or in combination, is contrary to the self-conscious, anti-sentimental and synthetically tough spirit of the time; but it is a valuable civilized and salutary element, none the less. That Eluard's gifts should have been forced, by the fashion or neurosis of his period, to disguise themselves as "unconscious" (so that their true imaginative flights will not lie open to scorn), and be reduced to the level of a word game, is peculiar enough. That they should have been twisted into the use of propaganda, and made to function under manifestoes, literary and otherwise, will certainly amuse future critics and diagnosticians of his era.

TRANSLATIONS OF POEMS QUOTED IN THE TEXT

A fine fire in the fireplace
A good carpet on the floor
Chairs around the table
Brushes ploughs bugles laces

All smoothly covered with bird-lime

THEIR EYES FOREVER PURE

Slow-passing days, days of rain,
Days of broken mirrors and lost needles,
Days of eyelids closed to the seas' horizon,
Of hours all alike, days of captivity.

My spirit which still glitters on the leaves
And the flowers, my spirit is naked like love,
Its forgotten dawn makes it lower its head
And look upon its obedient and vain body.

Nevertheless, I have seen the most beautiful eyes in the world,
Silver gods who hold sapphires in their hands,
Actual gods, birds in the earth
And in the water, I have seen them.

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Their wings are mine, nothing exists
But their flight which shakes off my unhappiness,
Their flight of star and light
Their flight of earth, their flight of stone
On the tide of their wings,

My thought sustained by life and death.

NECESSITY

Without great ceremony on earth
Near those who keep their equilibrium
Upon this unhappiness without risk
Very near the good road
In the dust of serious people
I establish relations between man and woman
Between the smeltings of the sun and the bag of drones
Between enchanted grottoes and the avalanche
Between eyes surrounded by dark circles and the laugh of desperation
Between the heraldic female blackbird and the star of garlic
Between the leaden thread and the noise of the wind
Between the fountain of ants and the cultivation of strawberries
Between the horseshoe and the fingertips
Between chalcedony and winter in pins
Between the tree of eyeballs and verified mimicry
Between the carotid artery and the ghost of salt
Between the araucaria and the head of a dwarf
Between rails at a junction and the russet dove
Between man and woman.
Between my solitude and thee.

CRITICISM OF POETRY

It is certain that I hate the rule of the bourgeois
The rule of cops and priests
But I hate even more the man who does not hate it
As I do
With all my strength.

I spit in the face of the man smaller than nature
Who does not prefer to all my other poems this CRITICISM OF POETRY.

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Two Poems by Paul Eluard

Sur quel mur suis-je gravé
Si profond que le jour y passe

Toutes les couleurs du printemps
Tous les mourants rebelles
Et leur chaleur muette
Jettent leurs sages ombres
Aux orties des gros rires
Aux heureux frénétiques

Sur quel grabat suis-je couché
Quelle verdure naît en moi
Où sont les ruines qui m'inspirent
De vivre malgré toute ruine.

(*Cours naturel, 1938*)

PAROLES PEINTES

à Pablo Picasso

Pour tout comprendre
Même
L'arbre au regard de proue
L'arbre adoré des lezards et des lianes
Même le feu même l'aveugle

Pour réunir aile et rosée
Coeur et nuage jour et nuit
Fenêtre et pays de partout

Pour abolir
La grimace du zéro
Qui demain roulera sur l'or

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Upon what wall am I engraved
So deeply that the light of day does not reach me

All the colors of spring
All those who are dying rebelliously
And their mute ardor
Throw their wise shadows
To nettles of loud laughter
To the frantically happy

Upon what pallet do I lie
What greenness is born in me
Where are the ruins which inspire me
To live in spite of all ruin

PAINTED WORDS

to Pablo Picasso

In order to understand everything
Even
The tree compared with the prow
The tree adored by lizard and liana
Even fire even the blind man

In order to reunite wing and dew
Heart and cloud day and night
The window and all the countryside

In order to abolish
The grin of zero
Which today rolls upon gold

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Pour trancher
Les petites manières
Des géants nourris d'eux-mêmes

Pour voir tous les yeux réfléchis
Par tous les yeux

Pour voir tous les yeax aussi beaux
Que ce qu'ils voient
Mer absorbante

Pour que l'on rie légèrement
D'avoir eu chaud, d'avoir eu froid
D'avoir eu faim d'avoir eu soif

Pour que parler
Soit aussi généreux
Qu'embrasser

Pour mêler baigneuse et rivière
Cristal et danseuse d'orage
Aurore et la saison des seins
Désirs et sagesse d'enfance

Pour donner à la femme
Méditative et seule
La forme des caresses
Qu'elle a rêvées

Pour que les déserts soient dans l'ombre
Au lieu d'être dans
Mon
Ombre

Donner
Mon
Bien
Donner
Mon
Droit

(*Cours naturel, 1938*)

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In order to cut off
The little tricks
Of giants nourished on themselves

In order to see all eyes reflected
In all eyes

In order to see all eyes as beautiful
As though they looked upon
An absorbing sea

In order that one may laugh lightly
At having been hot at having been cold
At having been hungry at having been thirsty

In order that to speak
May be as generous
As to embrace

In order to mingle bather and river
Crystal and dancer of the storm
Dawn and the season of the breasts
Desires and the wisdom of childhood

In order to give a woman
Meditative and alone
The kind of caresses
Of which she dreams

In order that deserts may lie in shadow
Instead of lying in
My shadow

To give
My
Good
To give
My
Right

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The Socialization of Muckraking

James Rorty

SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED to muckraking. One finds repeated recognition of this fact in current social criticism. For example, in the Summer, 1939 issue of *Partisan Review,* F. W. Dupee, in reviewing the career of Van Wyck Brooks, makes several stimulating references to the "respectable profession of muckraking." In the early nineteen hundreds, according to Mr. Dupee, the muckraker was the "standard intellectual type" of the intelligentsia. After the war, this type was displaced by the Menckenesque debunker and the expatriate "artist."

The observation would seem to be just enough. Yet since muckraking is not only a respectable profession but, like street cleaning, an essential function of any going society, it did not wholly disappear. Something happened to the profession and to the institutional apparatus at its disposal; something closely related to the sequence of major economic changes and the shifts in class alignment that came about during the three crucial decades of 1909-1939.

To use the current sociological argot, the ecology of the social and economic environment became less and less favorable to the muckraker *per se.* But since muck accumulates, and the arteries of social and economic traffic have to be kept more or less open, new kinds of literary White Wings appeared, under various disguises, the chief of these being the government investigator and the social scientist.

To call what happened to muckraking "socialization" is to be ironically suggestive rather than exact. When government is forced to take over and discharge an essential but financially unprofitable social function, it does not necessarily socialize it. A public receivership is not socialization. Moreover, the ordinary receivership is notoriously inefficient as well as frequently corrupt. On the whole, our contemporary socialized—or politicalized—

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muckraking gives the customers less for their money and holds back more than did the solvent muckraking *businesses* that flourished at the turn of the century.

This is not surprising. The evolution of muckraking parallels the enfeeblement and atrophy of many other social functions during the declining period of American capitalism. Here is the sequence of this evolution as it appears to a writer who grew up during the heyday of American muckraking, who read Samuel Hopkins Adams, Ray Stannard Baker, the Steffens of *The Shame of the Cities,* Thomas Lawson (billed as the Wolf of Wall Street), Harvey W. Wiley, David Graham Phillips, and many others as they appeared serially in *Colliers, American Magazine, Hearst's Metropolitan, McClures, Hampton's, Everybody's,* and *Cosmopolitan;* who at the age of nineteen was excited by H. G. Wells' *Tono-Bungay;* who has been himself a practicing muckraker for the past fifteen years.

1. *Muckraking Was Good Business.*

The Golden Age of Muckraking lasted only about fifteen years: roughly, from 1900 to the outbreak of the Great War. It was during this period that monopoly capitalism completed its conquest of power in America. In a sense, the outstanding muckrakers were like war correspondents engaged in reporting, to a terrified and struggling audience of little business men, with their employees and other peripheral dependents, the progress of this conquest. It was a large and vitally interested audience. Muckraking became the accepted method by which magazines piled up circulations of 500,000 and upward. In effect, muckraking was one of the going capitalist industries of the period, attracting the energies of some of the most brilliant business entrepreneurs and demagogues—S. S. McClure is an example of the first type; Hearst of the second—and employing at good wages many of the best literary and journalistic talents. The latter had two year contracts and fat expense accounts. They hired leg men, secretaries, research assistants, and other stooges like contemporary *Fortune* editors and radio news commentators. As the chief breadwinners of the periodical journalism of the period, they could afford even such things as a modicum of idealism.

Undoubtedly there were sacred cows in most of these maga-

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zines, but the business office was not yet dominant. Although advertising income was important in the economics of newspaper and periodical publishing, it had not yet become primary and decisive. Moreover, the internal competitive conflicts of the business community were still so varied and intense that a publisher could afford to attack one or even several business high-binders at once, without risk of calling forth effective reprisals by an organized and integrated business interest. Although in reality the era of small competitive business was passing, the magazine-reading middle class did not realize this. Monopoly capitalism was powerful, but not yet respectable. The "Uncle Trusty" of Opper's cartoons was a bandit, an obstructor of normal competitive economic traffic. It was the business of the muckrakers to expose and denounce these obstructors, and it was the business of the commercial magazines to publish the muckrakers; *Fortune* had not yet been born to glorify monopoly capitalism.

Then as now there were Congressional investigations and other forms of public muckraking, but government competition with private industry in this field was not yet onerous; we lacked the multitudinous New Deal agencies. Ordinarily government entered the field only toward the end, to achieve the legislative reforms for which the magazine muckrakers had prepared the way.

2. *Muckraking Became Bad Business*

Although the story of what happened to the muckraking periodicals of the nineteen hundreds has been told repeatedly, social historians have yet to deal adequately with this period. Briefly, Big Business, having consolidated its power, became exasperated by the clatter of the muckrakers and shut them off, quite simply, by buying up or otherwise eliminating the magazines that published them. Increasingly, journalists of the "disruptive" sort were obliged to write a book or hire a hall. Upton Sinclair survived, not as a magazine writer, but as a book writer who has frequently been obliged to publish his own books.

Most of the muckrakers made practical adaptations to the new order of things. Samuel Hopkins Adams became a popular fictioneer. David Graham Phillips had turned wholly to the novel some years before his death. Ray Stannard Baker became for an interval the pastoral David Grayson, author of *Adventures in Contentment*, Steffens went heavily philosophical and mystic.

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The war extinguished what was left of the earlier muckraking tradition. Socialists like Upton Sinclair and William English Walling joined the Wilsonian crusade. Others of the muckraking tribe went into more or less complete retirement.

Not only were they without magazine markets; *it would seem that to a degree at least their audience had shifted its allegiance.* The moment of tension that the muckrakers articulated was one of transition between two phases of the American capitalist evolution. During this period, large corporate business progressively liquidated and absorbed the small manufacturing and mercantile proprietors. It was they, with their various peripheral groups, who constituted the middle class magazine-reading audience. It may be hazarded that these readers became less interested in muckraking. The battle was over, and consciously or unconsciously they had changed sides; the on-coming generation at least, knew on which side its bread was buttered. Both the muckraking journals of the nineteen hundreds and the post-war compendia of escape fiction and "inspirationals" had large audiences; the interesting thing to note is that, in terms of social and economic status, they were pretty much the *same* audiences, although the policy of the magazines changed categorically.

3. *The Birth of a Magazine: Modern Style*

In the field of social communication, the growth of monopoly capitalism through the processes of merger, syndication, etc., has tended to give both newspapers and magazines the character of business properties and advertising media. Formerly, it was customary for a magazine to be started by an editor. Today, such enterprises are more likely to result from the pecuniary and intellectual cohabitations of bankers and advertising men. The idea is to find an unoccupied sector in the spectrum of periodical publishing: a group of buyers whom an appropriate editorial formula may serve to assemble and hold, so that they may be sold at so much a head to advertisers. The editorial formula is more or less of an after-thought; frequently it is purchased ready-made from a de luxe "publisher's consultant," who is merely a special kind of an advertising man. The latter may not be a genius, but he is never so naive as to suggest a bona fide muck-raking formula. If it is desired to assemble a "class" audience, the editorial formula is

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likely to be either a-social and a-political or frankly reactionary. If it is to be a mass magazine, it is planned, naturally, as a medium of mass advertising; the formula must then fit the lowest common denominator of both advertisers and readers. Being itself a business property, owned and operated by business men and financed by bankers, it necessarily supports the status quo of business and finance, regardless of the interests of its readers. The prevailing formula is one of a-social and a-political "entertainment," consisting chiefly of escape fiction and pluck-and-luck "inspirational" articles.

4. *Muckraking the Health Field: Before and After*

Take, for example, two publications: *Colliers* and *Good Housekeeping*. At the turn of the century, both these publications were oriented primarily toward their *readers*, whose interests they more or less consistently expressed and implemented. The exposures of Harvey W. Wiley in *Good Housekeeping* and of Samuel Hopkins Adams in *Colliers* served to bring about the enactment of the first food and drug legislation, some thirty years ago. But in 1933, when the rash Mr. Tugwell undertook to extend and stiffen this legislation, these and other mass magazines played a quite different role. As inheritors of the mantle of Wiley and Adams, writers like Stuart Chase and F. J. Schlink found themselves virtually without magazine outlets. They had to publish books and even to create their own consumer organizations and consumer press, both rather ineffective, compared to the mobilizations of opinion achieved by the muckraking popular magazines of the earlier period. Hence, with respect to their attempted advance on the consumer front, the New Dealers soon found themselves out on a limb, with the enraged wolves of the advertising-supported daily and periodical press—and the radio—leaping and baying around them. Both by what they printed and by what they failed to print, *Good Housekeeping* and *Colliers*—all the mass magazines for that matter—seemed to express the interest of their advertisers rather than that of their readers. But the contradiction was probably not as complete as it seemed. Consciously or unconsciously the editors of these magazines may have perceived and expressed a certain real identity of social and political convictions shared by both advertisers and middle class readers: a common belief that their interests

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lay in the preservation of the system of monopoly capitalism upon which they were both dependent, no matter how much waste, deception and exploitation in the production of consumer goods this system embodied. What the New Dealers learned, or might have learned from this experience, was that it was later than they thought —too late, at least, for reformism on the consumer front; that they were no longer dealing with a free economy; that the senile constipation of monopoly capitalism can be relieved only by the strong cathartic of force (state capitalism, which tends to become either fascist, or "communist"). In theory at least a genuine socialism would institute a different and a healthier metabolism.

As a free lance muckraker I did my best to rouse the countryside during the Tugwell Bill agitation. But since I had at my disposal only the penny whistle of the *Nation,* instead of sirens like *Good Housekeeping* and *Colliers,* I didn't get very far, nor did anybody else.

Four years later, when I became interested in the economics and politics of medicine my education concerning the status of muckraking in our time was considerably advanced. I thought the rise of the politico-economic dictatorship which Dr. Morris Fishbein had imposed upon the American medical profession was an interesting and significant story. Indeed, it had been a good story for at least a decade. It had been documented by the report of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care and by the attack directed at that report by Dr. Fishbein in 1932. It had been further documented by the symposium, *American Medicine* published by the American Foundation. These foundation-subsidized enterprises in fact-finding and opinion-measurement were notable examples of the philanthropic, sociological *ersatz* which had largely displaced commercial magazine muckraking during the post-war period; the sociologists were much more thorough in their compilation of data, but relatively timid and limited in their analysis and synthesis of findings.

If the medico-economic conflict had matured during the early nineteen hundreds, it would have been covered, one ventures to say, by at least one and probably several of the mass magazines of the period, especially after the social scientists had found the facts —and buried them with the customary rituals of academic publication. As it was, I had to make shift with the *Nation, Common Sense,*

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the *Bulletin* of the American Association for Social Security, and later the *New Leader*. Groggy from threats of libel, the *Nation* faded before the last round, although the threats were wholly bluff, as later experience showed. As for book publishers, the first two, as the going got hotter, incontinently broke their contracts and abandoned their advances. By the time the last one turned his option into a contract, Thurman Arnold's anti-trust prosecution of the American Medical Association and Dr. Fishbein had scooped a considerable part of my story, thereby supporting the principal thesis of this article: *That monopoly capitalism in the present period reveals a progressive atrophy of essential functions, muckraking being one of these functions; hence government is forced to take over muckraking to a greater degree than formerly.*

5. *The Sociological Ersatz*

In the atmosphere of confusion and apprehension that characterized the post-war period, sociological "fact-finding" had an obvious appeal. Serious muckraking was no longer possible without attacking the whole existing set-up of capitalist ownership and control, and it was not permissible to use major channels of social communication for this purpose. But it was necessary to relieve the growing social tensions. The fact-finding, more or less onanistic technique of the statistical sociologists not only served this purpose admirably, but gave profitable employment to the job-hungry "social scientists" who were being turned out in increasing quantities by the universities. During the Hoover administration several million dollars went into the production of the denatured and footless compilation entitled *Recent Economic Trends*. The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care, subsidized jointly by several large foundations, consumed four years and a million dollars. A long sequence of factual studies was produced by the National Bureau of Economic Research, founded and endowed by big business for the purpose of "finding the facts" and so narrowing the zone of social and political controversy. The National Bureau's studies of the panic cycle have been going on for at least two decades to such good effect that a well known social scientist recently opined that in a hundred years from now something may be known about this characteristic phenomenon of the capitalist economy. Meanwhile, however, Dr. Wesley C. Mitchell, director

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of the National Bureau, and our foremost authority on the panic cycle, declines to advise anxious statesmen who seek enlightenment in this quarter, on the ground that he does not yet know enough.

The advantages of this position, from the point of view of aggrandizing the prestige and emoluments of the social sciences as a profession, need scarcely be pointed out. The more the social scientist abstains from considering problems of social *evaluation* and *management* and confines himself austerely to the *quantification* and *measurement* of social phenomena, totally removed from any context of attitude, tendency, or program, the safer he is. By imitating, sometimes to the point of burlesque, the methods of the physical scientists, he comes within the aura of sanctity that surrounds the practitioners of these older scientific disciplines. Objective as the angels in heaven, he abstains from taking sides as a matter of principle. His not to reason why. He tells you that four hundred and sixty-five and a half citizens of Gopher Prairie answered "yes" to the question: "Don't you think the New Deal is not so hot?" You can take it or leave it.

Obviously, the statistical sociologists will never run out of phenomena to measure, particularly in this declining period of monopoly capitalism. The more you avoid doing anything about social problems except to measure them—or rather, such parts of them as may be safely examined—the more social problems you have and the richer the symptomatic manifestations that must be measured exactly before anything can be done about the problems. By applying a static technique to a dynamic process you not only mark time, but march triumphantly backwards, like the Sabine men, with the stainless banner of Objectivity going on before—that is to say, behind. Only recently have American sociologists—notably Robert Lynd—begun to recognize the implications of the fact that the social scientist is himself a part of the process which he is measuring; that "objective" out-of-context measurements are not merely futile but frequently come under the head of propaganda by omission and suppression. Only recently have they seen any connection between the fact that Thorstein Veblen, with his genius for synthesis, was one of the most tendential social scientists of his generation—and remains today perhaps the most durable and usable of them all.

Meanwhile, however, nothing succeeds like success, and the

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methods of these sociological measuring sticks remain admirably calculated to make work, and recruit followers. Most surveys are "exploratory." They are designed to obtain some hints as to methods that might be practicable for the measuring of such and such social phenomena. The first hundred years, concerned solely with methodology, are the hardest. After that it becomes necessary to evaluate the methods used in making these methodological determinations. Next it is in point to evaluate the methods of the evaluators. By this time the original sociological pair have multiplied by a process of normal academic proliferation to three hundred thousand six hundred and sixty-six, and if they had been rabbits, the exasperated ranchers would have driven them into the Grand Canyon long ago.

6. *Community of Interest*

This, in the end, is what the muckraker dies of. Sooner or later he finds that he cannot attack anything without attacking everything; simultaneously, he discovers that this creeping community of interest of a defensive, dying economy has robbed him of his means of production, which are a pay check and an avenue of publication. Accordingly he ceases to function, while muck accumulates, and the society moves nearer to the pseudo-catharsis of fascism.

Commercial magazines have sacred cows, liberal and radical non-commercial magazines have sacred cows, government keeps sacred cows and is kept by them. The cigarette industry, for example, combines a maximum of sanctity with a maximum of anti-social noxiousness. As the hard-boiled Westbrook Pegler pointed out in one of his most acrid columns, "we live by our vices." Since our Federal, state and municipal governments derive important revenue from the various cigarette taxes, they all have a vested interest in the perpetuation and extension of the vice. This interest is shared by the newspaper, magazine, and radio businesses, to which the Big Four cigarette manufacturers contributed well over thirty million dollars worth of advertising in 1938. Although cigarette tobacco contains a multitude of drugs, including several active poisons such as nicotine, carbon-monoxide, ammonia, pyridine, prussic acid, wood-alcohol, collidine, formaldehyde, tar, lead and arsenic, the Food and Drug Administration

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declares that it has no jurisdiction over the manufacture and distribution of cigarettes. Although the cigarette has long ago been outlawed by medical science, cigarette manufacturers are permitted to advertise heavily in the medical press, which from time to time prints scientific articles proving beyond question that cigarette smoking shortens life and that the vice is an important contributing cause of the illnesses and diseases which doctors are employed to prevent and cure. In the case of the Philip Morris Company, the *Journal* of the American Medical Association and its editor, Dr. Morris Fishbein, became the principal instruments by which this company was enabled to bolster its dubious claims with subsidized research, and harness the prestige of the American medical profession to one of the boldest, most unscrupulous promotion campaigns in the history of American advertising. Since this campaign was based on the Philip Morris' substitution of diethylene glycol for glycerine as a moistener, the very foundations of business were shaken when the papers reported, in October, 1937, that seventy-two people had died as a result of taking this chemical, used by an irresponsible drug house as a solvent for the valuable drug, sulfanalimide. But not for long. Quickly the imperilled vested interests joined forces to repair the breach. The *Journal* of the A. M. A. announced editorially that there was no evidence that diethylene glycol when used as an ingredient in the manufacture of cigarettes is harmful. The National Better Business Bureau sent out a hush-hush bulletin quoting this statement and sternly denouncing an alleged "whispering campaign" against Philip Morris cigarettes. No commercial magazine would take an article from me setting forth the facts of this situation. The *Nation* rejected three such articles on advice of counsel, who contributed the astonishing opinion that "this article cannot be revised to make it non-libelous." In the end I was forced to tell the story from the platform of the 1938 conference of the American Association for Social Security. Nobody sued me for libel then or since, but also, no newspaper published what I said.

I have cited this example at some length because it illustrates so perfectly what lies back of Mr. Pegler's pseudo-profound dictum. It is not quite true that "we live by our vices." What really happens is that we anchor a particular vice in the very bedrock of our exploitative economy, so that we are obliged to die of it. What

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is more, in the interest of good business, balancing the budget, and practical politics, we had better not even talk about it.

7. *The Not-Muckraking Business*

The muckraker's chief remaining asset today is his nuisance value, and even that is not easy to exploit. So firmly integrated is the existing community of interest that the muckraker is rarely very dangerous no matter how authentic the muck that he uncovers. Moreover, blackmail is a dangerous business for both parties concerned. At various times I have received verbal suggestions that I might enjoy a subsidized trip to the Riviera or to Mexico. It has also been suggested that I do some highly paid "research" for certain commercial companies. But I am confident that if I had yielded to any of these blandishments, the payoff would have been meagre. All that a briber needs is one small scrap of evidence that the muckraker is corruptible. By threatening exposure he can then eliminate the muckraker's nuisance value.

What is more likely to happen, judging from the writer's experience is that the muckraker enables public relations experts and lawyers to turn a neat profit by protecting, or pretending to protect, their clients from damage. In such situations, the public relations counsel invariably assures his client that the muckraker is twice as dangerous as he actually is, just as the professional stool pigeon tells the boss that the shop is full of "reds." Naturally, the public relations counsel has a friendly and grateful feeling for those ardent spirits, the muckrakers, since they are, after a fashion, his collaborators. I recall one occasion when, after I had been very expensively dined by a very expensive public relations counsel, he shook my hand fondly in farewell and said: "Go home, now; don't get hit by a taxi, and cover your precious self up tight. You're my Dionne quintuplets."

Toward the Coordination of Muckraking

While the foregoing roughly sketched sequence is scarcely sufficient to *prove* a trend, the general drift of the facts is a matter of common observation among journalists and politicians. Serious economic and social muckraking—naturally one takes no account of run-of-the-mill gang-busting and scandal mongering—has ceased to be a profitable department of commercial newspaper and periodical journalism. As for the newer forms of communication,

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the modern "community of interest" of monopoly capitalism was well established before the movies and radio appeared on the scene; we have seen only few and ephemeral examples of movie and radio muckraking, the present tendency being overwhelmingly to iron out these media into profitable conformity with the needs of the business community. For media, therefore, the muckraker is reduced to the book, the pamphlet, the platform, and the increasingly partisan-political radical and liberal press—the latter being of relatively negligible circulation.

Muckraking is being increasingly *socialized* in the sense that the costs are paid out of the public purse or out of the surplus social value which has been segregated and doled out by the philanthropic foundations. A substantial amount of muckraking is being routinely performed by such government agencies as the Federal Trade Commission, the Food and Drugs Administration, the Securities Exchange Commission, the Works Progress Administration, and the Labor Relations Board. The net production of the foundation-subsidized sociologists is also still considerable and by no means without value despite the tendency toward intellectual onanism and job-racketing already noted. Most of the foundations have been chased out of most of the "hot" fields of inquiry—medical economics for example. But since their executive staffs have vested interests in their jobs they often don the asbestos suits of an increasingly "scientific" argot and return like moths to the flame.

The combined production of the public and philanthropic muckrakers is *quantitatively* very large; almost, if not quite as great as the total volume of commercial magazine muckraking during the first decade of the century. Unfortunately the production of both these contemporary muckraking mills, especially the former, is highly selective, censored, and *politicalized,* which means that it is functionally stultified. Honest muckraking, like honest plumbing, is no respecter of muck; the idea is to construct and maintain efficient economic and social drainage. Political muckraking is quite different. Political muckrakers are concerned on the one hand with muckraking their opponents, and on the other with concealing and deodorizing the deposits that accumulate in their own back yards.

There is only one thing worse, and less habitable than a social order with bad drainage, and incompetent drain men. That is a

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social order with no drainage whatever, and no drain men. A totalitarian state is such a social order. True, it resolves, after a fashion the conflict of economic vested interests: partly by the harassment of scapegoats, partly by armed coercion applied to all classes, especially the workers. But the economic and social metabolism drops to lower and lower levels, and new centers of corruption are established. Meanwhile the population is forbidden even to hold its nose in public, this being the totalitarian substitute for adequate social plumbing.

It is not a satisfactory substitute and seemingly it cannot be long endured. What will come after? Speaking as muckraker, not as prophet, I am permitted to say only this: that Marx and the Marxists in general have rather conspicuously neglected to write specifications for the social plumbing of the Socialist commonwealth; or, to my knowledge, have such specifications been written by anybody. Perhaps I am influenced by professional bias, but I am convinced that such specifications are necessary.

SOME AMERICANS STILL IN SPAIN TO SOME STALINISTS STILL IN AMERICA

You sent us here, and here we rot:
The fight we propped has gone to pot.
The Pope and all his priests in Spain
Are safe as in the Vatican;
And you who sent us, safe at home,
Are pliant to the Pope of Rome.
—Now tell us plainly, teachers dear,
Which folks our comrades most shall fear:
Grandees who boast the Pope their boss
Or Communists who kiss the Cross?

E. W. and M. McC.

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The Situation in American Writing

Seven Questions (Part Two)

1. *Are you conscious, in your own writing, of the existence of a "usable past"? Is this mostly American? What figures would you designate as elements in it? Would you say, for example, that Henry James's work is more relevant to the present and future of American writing than Walt Whitman's?*

2. *Do you think of yourself as writing for a definite audience? If so, how would you describe this audience? Would you say that the audience for serious American writing has grown or contracted in the last ten years?*

3. *Do you place much value on the criticism your work has received? Would you agree that the corruption of the literary supplements by advertising—in the case of the newspapers—and political pressures—in the case of the liberal weeklies—has made serious literary criticism an isolated cult?*

4. *Have you found it possible to make a living by writing the sort of thing you want to, and without the aid of such crutches as teaching and editorial work? Do you think there is any place in our present economic system for literature as a profession?*

5. *Do you find, in retrospect, that your writing reveals any allegiance to any group, class, organization, region, religion, or system of thought, or do you conceive of it as mainly the expression of yourself as an individual?*

6. *How would you describe the political tendency of American writing as a whole since 1930? How do you feel about it yourself? Are you sympathetic to the current tendency towards what may be called "literary nationalism"—a renewed emphasis, largely uncritical, on the specifically "American" elements in our culture?*

7. *Have you considered the question of your attitude towards the possible entry of the United States into the next world war? What do you think the responsibilities of writers in general are when and if war comes?*

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Sherwood Anderson:

1. I am afraid I do not know what you mean by "usable past." It seems to me that for the story teller everything is usable. I am afraid that my difficulty in trying to answer these questions is that I spend little time thinking of either the past or the future. It is my passionate desire to live in the NOW. Mine is not a very critical mind. No, I do not believe that Henry James's work is more relevant to American writing than Walt Whitman's. There is more of the earth in Whitman's. No matter what fool things man does the earth remains.

2. This is also difficult for me to answer. I do not believe that I ever think of an audience as a definite thing. I often sing to myself in bathrooms. I tell myself stories, but just the same no man could go on working in any of the arts without a response.

You ask whether the audience for serious American writing has grown or contracted in the last ten years and frankly I do not know.

3. Yes, I do place value on criticism my own work has received. I have been helped by criticism. I know well enough that good criticism is rare but hasn't it always been rare. Of course the literary supplements have been corrupted by advertising. For nearly fifteen years I had to spend my own time as an advertising writer because I felt myself not strong enough physically to stand day labor and couldn't make a living by my story telling. I sincerely believe that all advertising is corrupt.

4. It seems to me that the answer to this depends upon what you mean by making a living. I have had to do all sorts of things to keep going but believe also that men working seriously in any of the arts have always had a hard time making a living. Now that I have been writing for twenty or twenty-five years enough does usually trickle in to keep me going. It has, however, been a long hard pull.

5. I am sure that all my writing has always been simply an expression of my own feelings as an individual. I have a notion that any writing done for the purpose of propaganda is basically corrupt.

6. Like most writers I am really not a great reader. I did most of my reading before I began writing. Now I am chiefly interested in the lives of people immediately about me. If you are an American how can you help emphasizing what you feel and see in the particular portion of America immediately about you. My mind cannot go beyond that. From time to time I have made efforts to think nationally and internationally but it has always seemed bunk to me.

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7. I suppose I am an isolationist. I do not believe in any war. I think that in any war both sides lose. In a time of war any man working in the arts is sunk. His lamps are out. A new and strange ugliness comes into everyone about him. It is for him a time of death.

Louise Bogan:

1. Because what education I received came from New England schools, before 1916, my usable past has more of a classic basis than it would have today, even in the same background. The courses in English Literature which I encountered during my secondary education and one year of college, were not very nutritious. But my "classical" education was severe, and I read Latin prose and poetry and Xenophon and the Iliad, during my adolescence. Arthur Symons' The Symbolist Movement, and the French poets read at its suggestion, were strong influences experienced before I was twenty. The English metaphysicals (disinterred after 1912 and a literary fashion during my twenties) provided another literary pattern, and Yeats influenced my writing from 1916, when I first read Responsibilities. —The American writers to whom I return are Poe (the Tales), Thoreau, E. Dickinson and Henry James. Whitman, read at sixteen, with much enthusiasm, I do not return to, and I never drew any refreshment from his "thought." Henry James I discovered late, and I read him for the first time with the usual prejudices against him, absorbed from the inadequate criticism he has generally received. It was not until I had developed some independent critical judgment that I recognized him as a great and subtle artist. If civilization and great art mean complexity rather than simplification, and if the humane can be defined as the well understood because the well-explored, James' work is certainly more relevant to American writing, present and future, than the naive vigor and sentimental "thinking" of Whitman.

2. I have seldom thought about a definite "audience" for my poetry, and I certainly have never believed that the wider the audience, the better the poetry. Poetry had a fairly wide audience during what was roughly known as the "American poetic renaissance." It has been borne in upon me, in the last ten years, that there are only a few people capable of the aesthetic experience, and that, in this group, some persons who are able to appreciate "form" in the graphic arts, cannot recognize it in writing, just as there are writers who cannot "hear" music, or "see" painting. This small element in the population remains, it seems to me, more or less constant, and penetrates class distinctions. People may be led up to the threshold

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of the aesthetic experience, and taught its elements and its value, but I have never seen a person in whom the gift was not native actually experience the "shock of recognition" which a poem (or any work of art) gives its appreciator. And it is individuals to whom the aesthetic experience is closed, or those who know what it is, but wish to load it with a misplaced weight of "meaning" (and it seems incredible that such people as the last named exist; it is one of the horrors of life that they do)—it is such people who think that this experience can be "used."—Certainly the audience for the disinterested and the gratuitous in writing was never very large, in America. The layer of American "culture" has always been extremely thin. And it has not deepened in itself, but has been subject to fashions hastily imposed upon it. And the American "cultural" background is thick with ideas of "success" and "morality." So a piece of writing which is worth nothing, and means nothing (but itself) is, to readers at large, silly and somewhat immoral. "Serious writing" has come to mean, to the public, the pompous or thinly documentary. The truly serious piece of work, where a situation is explored at all levels, disinterestedly, for its own sake, is outlawed.

3. No.—The corruption of the literary supplements is nearly complete, but who would expect it to be otherwise, when publishers admit that they are selling packaged goods, for the most part: that their products, on the whole, stand on the same level as cigarettes and whiskey, as sedatives and pain-killers? — I have written criticism for liberal weeklies and can testify that in the case of one of them, no pressure of any kind has ever been put upon me. I have also been left perfectly free by a magazine which makes no claim to be anything but amusing. . . . Serious criticism is, now in America, seriously hampered by the extraordinarily silly, but really (on the sentimental public at large), amazingly effective under-cover methods of certain pressure groups. But if there is no one who has the good sense to see the difference between warmed-over party tracts and actual analysis —if the public swallows such stuff whole—perhaps that is what the public deserves. Perhaps there is a biological bourgeoisie, thick headed and without sensibilities, thrown up into every generation, as well as an economic one. I discovered, long ago, that there are human attributes the gods themselves, as some one has said, cannot war against, and some of them are stupidity, greed, vanity, and arrogance.

4. I have never been able to make a living by writing poetry and it has never entered my mind that I could do so. I think the place in our present American set-up for the honest and detached professional writer is both small and cold. (But then, it was both small and cold for Flaubert, in 19th century France.)

5. My writing reveals some "allegiances" (if this term means certain marks made upon it by circumstance). I was brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, and was exposed to real liturgy, instead of the dreary

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"services" and the dreadful hymnody of the Protestant churches. There was a Celtic gift for language, and talent in the form of a remarkable excess of energy, on the maternal side of my family. And I was handed out, as I have said, a thorough secondary classical education, from the age of twelve through the age of seventeen, in the public schools of Boston. I did not know I was a member of a class until I was twenty-one; but I knew I was a member of a racial and religious minority, from an early age. One of the great shocks of my life came when I discovered that bigotry existed not only among the Catholics, but among the Protestants, whom I had thought would be tolerant and civilized (since their pretentions were always in that direction). It was borne in upon me, all during my adolescence, that I was a "Mick," no matter what my other faults or virtues might be. It took me a long time to take this fact easily, and to understand the situation which gave rise to the minor persecutions I endured at the hands of supposedly educated and humane people. — I came from the white-collar class and it was difficult to erase the dangerous tendencies—the impulse to "ripe" and respect "nice people"—of this class. These tendencies I have wrung out of my spiritual constitution with a great deal of success, I am proud to say. — Beyond these basic influences, I think of my writing as the expression of my own development as an individual.

6. The political tendency of American writing since 1930 is, I believe, more symptomatic of a spiritual *malaise* than is generally supposed. Granted that the economic crisis became grave; it is nevertheless peculiar and highly symptomatic that intellectuals having discovered that "freedom" is not enough, and does not automatically lead to depth of insight and peace of mind, threw over *every scrap of their former enthusiasms*, as though there were something sinful in them. The economic crisis occurred when that generation of young people was entering the thirties; and, instead of fighting out the personal ills attendant upon the transition from youth to middle age, they took refuge in closed systems of belief, and automatically (many of them) committed creative suicide. . . . "Literary nationalism" has valuable elements in it; it opened the eyes of writers, superficially at least, to conditions which had surrounded them from childhood, but which they had spent much effort "escaping." But when this nationalism took a fixed form (when it became more fashionable to examine the situation of the share-cropper, for example, than the situation of slum-dwellers in Chelsea, Massachusetts, or Newark, New Jersey) its value dwindled. And the closing of one foreign culture after another, to the critical and appreciative examination of students, is one deplorable result of thinking in purely political terms. Any purely chauvinistic enthusiasm is, of course, always ridiculous.

This is the place, perhaps, to state my belief that the true sincerity and compassion which humane detachment alone can give, are necessary before the writer can pass judgment upon the ills of his time. To sink oneself into a party is fatal, no matter how noble the tenets of that party may

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be. For all tenets tend to harden into dogma, and all dogma breeds hatred and bigotry, and is therefore stultifying. And the condescension of the political party toward the artist is always clear, however well disguised. The artist will be "given" his freedom; as though it were not the artist who "gives" freedom to the world, and not only "gives" it, but is the only person capable of enduring it, or of understanding what it costs. The artists who remain exemplars have often, it is true, become entangled in politics, but it is not their political work which we remember. Nonsense concerning the function of the arts has been tossed about for centuries. Art has been asked, again, as the wind changed, to be "romantic," "filled with sensibility," "classic," "useful," "uplifting" and whatnot. The true artist will instinctively reject "burning questions" and all "crude oppositions" which can cloud his vision or block his ability to deal with his world. All this has been fought through before now: Turgenev showed up the pretentions of the political critic Belinsky; Flaubert fought the battle against "usefulness" all his life; Yeats wrote the most superb anti-political poetry ever written. Flaubert wrote, in the midst of one bad political period: "Let us [as writers] remain the river and turn the mill."

7. In the event of another war, I plan to oppose it with every means in my power. The responsibilities of writers in general, I should think, lie in such active opposition.

Lionel Trilling:

7. I should like to answer the last question first because I find that it is the only one that I "face." The other questions are interesting but this one is immediate and crucial. The possibility of war is the great objective and subjective fact which confronts every writer.

Whether or not he is wholly conscious of it, the writer lives by his faith in continuity. He must feel that he himself will go on indefinitely to practice his craft; he must suppose a connection between himself and the past; and he must assume, however modestly, that he has some connection with the future. This sense of continuity is, of course, attenuated or destroyed by the possibility of war. Perhaps tomorrow, the writer feels, he will cease to be a writer—and immediately it becomes infinitely more difficult for him to be a writer today. He knows what war will mean: for the war-period, at the very least, there will be a cessation of literary activ-

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ity in any true sense; and perhaps—indeed, most likely—the post-war political situation will discontinue the culture of the past and prevent the culture of the future: there is every likelihood that the writer will be either silenced or enslaved. This possibility of war must be sitting like a raven on many a literary desk. But it is not sitting on all the desks and that, now, is almost a worse fact than that it is sitting on some.

I conceive that in the event of war the writer's responsibilities are: to survive, to remain undeceived, to keep others from being deceived.

6. This last question may be followed most appropriately by the penultimate one, for the willingness—even the eagerness—of so many intellectuals to accept war seems to me to be the direct outgrowth of the political tendency which has dominated American literature since 1930. This tendency began as a furious romantic revolutionism and is continuing as an angry self-righteous reformism of which war is to be an instrument. The literature dominated by this tendency has been enormously influential; for a large and important part of the intellectual middle class it has provided what is nothing less than a culture and an ethics. It has given these people "something to live for," a point of view, an object for contempt, a direction for anger, a code of excited humanitarianism. Perhaps this literary movement, politically effective rather than artistically successful, cannot be wholly reprobated, for it has stimulated a kind of moral sensitivity. But this is a moral sensitivity which seems to me dangerous in its insufficiency. The subject is too complex and too delicate to be treated briefly but what I feel about this literature of social protest is that, however legitimate and laudable is its intention of arousing pity and anger, in actual fact, because of its artistic failures, it constitutes a form of "escapism," and offers a subtle flattery by which the progressive middle-class reader is cockered up with a sense of his own virtue and made to feel that he lives in a world of perfect certainties in which critical thought or self-critical feeling are the only dangers.

The literary nationalism we are at present experiencing is of course an intensification of the ideology I have just commented on. All nationalism, like all conscious virtue, stands on the edge of vulgarity, and by nationalism I do not mean the love of one's land, language and literature; nor do I even mean patriotism; but I do mean these emotions employed to prove that there is an intrinsic and nearly exclusive rightness in one's land, literature and language. No doubt there are some political situations—not so many as we suppose, however—where nationalism serves truly good ends. I think the present American leftist nationalism, so much of it the reaction to the cold contempt of American life which was current a few years ago, so much of it the calculated policy of a party line, cannot be anything but vulgar and, in the end, downright chauvinistic.

1. This leads, of course, to Question 1, about the "usable past." I think it can no longer be said, as Henry James said in his biography of Haw-

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thorne, that the American writer lacks the sense of a rich past. There is a superb "thickness" about the feel of American life; and in any such "thickness" there must be a strong, even though unformulated, sense of the past. And part of this is a sense of a *literary* past. I do not mean by this a special consciousness of the canonical American writers. In my own case, for example, though I have great admiration and affection for the American classics and an increasing interest, I know that they have been far less important to me than the traditional body of European writers. What I do mean is that I have a fortifying sense that there is, simply, a past of literature which makes a present all the more possible; and this is something that, at various times in our history, our writers have not felt. As for the traditional body of world literature, I find that it becomes, for me, more and more "usable" and seems less and less in the past at all.

If I answer the question about Henry James and Walt Whitman by saying that I think James likely to be the healthier influence upon American writing, I must disclaim meaning any derogation of Whitman himself. For Whitman is a very great poet and subtler and more beautifully modulated than most people care to discover. But his influence is likely to be that of a mood and a manner and likely to encourage the simplified social emotions and the nationalism I have just spoken of. On the other hand, any influence that Henry James may have will be through the suggestiveness of his method. James is essentially critical and moral and therefore more energetic than Whitman. He is concerned with upsetting preconceptions and clichés; he sees the difficulties and dangers of the moral and social life; he is interested in the shadings and contradictions—in drama in the old sense, which is what I feel lacking in contemporary American fiction —and he stands against the black and white, the *de haute en bas*, simplified morality now so common. Clearly the complexity of the kind of judgment he uses and suggests will not be attractive to the group that puts John Steinbeck among the American classics and that is preparing for the "action" of war.

5. In Question 5 the disjunction is obviously not a valid one. I think of my work as the expression of myself as an individual *and* (not *or*) as revealing an allegiance to a group and to a system—or, rather, a tradition —of thought. It seems to me necessary to conceive one's work in this way. The vulgar—but not ineffective—attack on "individualism" a few years ago accounted for the dullness, the lack of distinction (the word is significant here) of so much of the creative and critical writing that was done when the idea of the collectively written novel was seriously discussed. I suppose that one does not have to explain that, *in a certain limited sense*, there is no such thing as an individual—that a mind or a talent, almost by definition, is a social thing. But once we illegitimately extend that certain limited sense we run into confusion in morality, in politics, in literature. As for literature, I am quite willing to say that it is absolutely essential for the writer to cultivate his individuality to the top of its bent, and to

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resist all attempts to thwart it. If his "social consciousness" requires him to give a social reason for this, he can say that it is only as he varies from the usual that he has any social usefulness. And exactly because there is such a thing as an "individual" there is such a thing as an "allegiance."

My own literary interest—and I suppose that in a writer this is an allegiance—is in the tradition of humanistic thought and in the intellectual middle class which believes that it continues this tradition. Nowadays this is perhaps not properly pious; but however much I may acknowledge the historic role of the working class and the validity of Marxism, it would be *only* piety for me to say that my chief literary interest lay in this class and this tradition. What for me is so interesting in the intellectual middle class is the dramatic contradition of its living with the greatest possibility (call it illusion) of conscious choice, its believing itself the inheritor of the great humanist and rationalist tradition, and the badness and stupidity of its action.

2. By and large, it is for this intellectual class that I suppose I write. It is a class that has grown enormously in the last decade. And no doubt the market for serious writing has grown with it. Naturally, a great deal of this writing is serious only in the sense that its publishers consider it to be serious or only because moral earnestness and intellectual pretension pass for seriousness. But then real seriousness is at all times a very rare quality.

4. Perhaps I am not qualified to answer the first part of Question 4, because I have never tried to make a living out of writing. I have little doubt that it would be for me next to impossible. I should like to say, however, that I have found teaching something more than a "crutch." Perhaps I have been exceptionally lucky, but I have found it not only a pleasant but an exciting and instructive kind of work despite its bad reputation. For criticism, at any rate, it seems invaluable to have to deal, on the one hand, with freshmen who are relatively intelligent but either ignorant of literature, or naive about it or even inimical to it, for it forcibly reminds the critic how small a part literature plays in our world and it makes him bring his assumptions out of their professional cave; then, on the other hand, it is very salutary to have to face talented seniors who will give one no quarter; and the subject matter, the most interesting work of the past, is always a refreshment.

The problems of literary economics are too complex to be written about briefly. When we remember how the best writers of an age are sometimes commercially the most successful, how, again, they are sometimes the most obscure, or think of themselves as hacks, or depend on inherited wealth or position, or do their best work when they are fashionably taken up by a "decadent" society, or when they are neglected—when we consider all these contradictions and many more, we can speak of the ideal situation for the writer only with the greatest diffidence. I find it hard to imagine a condition in which literature will not be (in one sense, in the sense that

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medicine, say, need not be) a most competitive profession and one always forced to face social resistance. This seems to me to be in the nature of the literary activity; any artist in the degree that he is notable must always be making minor revolutions or supporting them, revolutions in taste and feeling. He is therefore always going to be rejected and resisted both by *some* part of his profession and by *some* part of society. No doubt this entails a certain amount of social waste. And no doubt the present social system wastes far more literary talent than other conceivable systems might; it wastes everything. On the other hand, it must be confessed that it allows and even encourages a great deal too.

I think I should be more willing to attack the literary waste in our present system (I mean apart from the general waste of human life and its best possibilities) if I had a clearer notion of how I should like to see the economic life of the writer organized. But whenever an alternative to literary *laissez faire* is put forward which undertakes to be more rational and thoroughgoing than WPA, it contrives to theorize literature into being more important than it is and should be, to make it into a form of religion and to bring it into the service of the state and eventually under the control of a bureau. It is hard to imagine a condition in which, as someone said, the state will pay the piper and the piper will call his own tune.

Robert Penn Warren:

I simply haven't had the time to do a proper set of answers to your questions. They are good questions, I think, and being good, they are not questions which can be answered in an hour or so. But I may give you a few jottings now, which, possibly, may have some statistical interest for you.

1. Yes. Or rather, after a thing is done, I can see its relation to a "usable past." In poetry, this "usable past" is not American, for I feel that American poetry has very little to offer the modern writer—except some of Emily Dickinson and a very little of Emerson. But in fiction the picture appears very different. Certainly, I feel that the work of James is much more relevant to the present and future of American writing than the work of Walt Whitman. On the technical side, the work of Whitman has, it seems to me, been exercising a very destructive influence.

2. I suppose that every writer wants an audience, but I could not undertake to describe the audience which I want at the time when I am actually

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engaged in writing a poem or a story. The nature of the poem or story is conditioned by many much more immediate concerns.

3. In general, no. I would agree with your statement about the newspapers and liberal weeklies, but I think that your diagnosis is not quite complete. There is a great deal of reviewing which is just stupid without reference to advertising or political pressure; it is probably the result of careless editing, of throwing books out to any reviewer who happens along. The reviewing of poetry is in a worse state than the reviewing of fiction, it seems to me; probably because the reviewers of poetry put on more airs.

4. I haven't tried, but I am sure that I would not have been very successful at it. As for the second part of the question: is there a place in our present economic system for literature as a profession? A lot of money is spent for writing; the trouble is that most of the money which is spent is spent to encourage bad writing.

5. God knows, I don't.

6. The political tendency of American writing since 1930 has been, I suppose, in the direction of social protest. As for my own feelings, I have been in sympathy with the protests, but have not liked most of the literature which the protests have produced. A lot of writers seem to have felt that if the protest was all right the writing would automatically be all right. And there has been, of course, a lot of faddishness; for instance, if you will call the roll, you will find names of people who have been on every bandwagon from flaming youth to communism, through humanism and dada. But this is inevitable.

7. I think that if we get into the next war we are suckers.

Robert Fitzgerald:

The questions seem fuzzy to me, and by their imprecision not very flattering to the writers of whom they are asked. Some are leading ques-

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tions, a presumption which I think you should regret. I should like to take up No. 1 at some length and the others more briefly.

1. "Are you conscious, in your own writing, of the existence of a 'usable' past?" The trouble with this is that it does not call for an answer; it contains an answer, and worse, it contains two or three answers. If it had been merely, "Are you conscious of the existence of the past?" there would have been only one possible answer. In that case the interrogation would have been merely rhetorical; you would in fact have been stating a proposition. I will not go into the ambiguity of the phrase "in your own writing" further than to point out that if it means "as you write" it is superfluous. But the words "a 'usable' " introduce confusion. They imply that there are pasts and pasts; that one sort is "usable" and another sort is "not usable"; and further that by "usable" we must understand some other quality, since the word is in quotation marks and therefore does not mean what it says.

Well, but this is literary shop talk, as everyone knows. Precisely; but let literary shop talk remain where it belongs, in the literary shops, and not be made the language of serious discussion. For if you are using "usable past" in the sense in which literary businessmen understand it, no writer of devotion can accept your terms. But I take it that the quotation marks are marks of deprecation; that what you mean to ask is something like this: "Is your consciousness of the past such as to enrich your writing, or are you merely helplessly conscious of it?" Confronted by these alternatives (and you make no suggestion of degree) no writer this side of sterility can return any answer but one; the self-answered question dissolves. You knew it would, else you would not have asked:

"Is this [past] mostly American?" Now we come to the point, which is again not a question but a proposition, since it is American writers whom you are addressing. How can the past which nourishes them be anything but "mostly American" if America has been their home? And in the rare event that it has not been their home, is not the answer likewise implied? But now something happens:

"What figures would you designate as elements in it? Would you say, for example, that Henry James' work is more relevant to the present and future of American writing than Walt Whitman's?" Up to this point we have been considering the past, that past whose infinity of charm and action and unhappiness each man inherits and remembers. Now as examples of "Figures" in that mostly American past you propose two writers and two bodies of literature. Without warning the midnight lamp is lit; the topic narrows down to that of literary presences and models. This seems strange to me; it seems strange that you should be thinking of the American past in terms of Whitman and James instead of Calhoun and Hanna and Gould and Gary and Debs. And it appears now that by the "mostly American" past of the second question you meant past literature. I do not think it would be wilfully naive to expect you to say so.

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The literature from and about which a man may generalize must consist of the books he has read, and for an American those are commonly books in English, of which there is a longer line by English writers than by American. In this sense the past is less likely to be "mostly American" the more literature a given person has read. I do not see what purpose would be served were I to confide my own range of reading. To designate any (especially valued) elements in it would be to trot out a list of no particular interest beyond the fact that it happened to be mine. As for Henry James and Whitman, it would require more critical mastery than I possess over present and emergent writing in America to analyse their respective relevancies. It seems to me rather a pedantic task to do so, and I'm damn well tired of hearing the two of them built up into Antithetical Forces in American literature. That isn't what they wrote for; it certainly isn't what they wrote *as;* and in an English-American literature which likewise accommodates Chaucer and Yeats, Shakespeare and Pope and Hardy, it seems to me fruitless to fence up a couple of 19th Century categories and herd every American writer into one or the other of them. Finally, "the present and future of American writing" is a pompous mouthful which sounds empty to me.

2. Whatever I am able to write as an artist is responsive to the known existence of minds sensitive to language and capable of imagination. I have written little or no verse deliberately to gratify or affect any one person or group of persons. On the other hand, I believe it is impossible to be a writer without being conscious of possible readers; indeed, an exact idea of how different people read is part of a writer's necessary knowledge of his predicament. It seems to me certain, however, that the sense of life and the sense of art, when they exist together at full intensity, leave little room for consideration of any but the abstract, loved-because-all-potential, reader. I put this down because it is a permanent truth which your questions lead away from, not toward. Such writing as we are here engaged in is obviously directed at a very palpable "audience" of Americans versed in literature and disposed to think their way through current political and social obsessions. This must be the audience for serious American writing. As to whether it has grown or shrunk in the last ten years, that is a question to which nothing that anyone would say could provide an answer, failing purely statistical research.

3. You must realize how heavily baited this question is. Writers commonly affect amusement or worse at the public observations of their critics, and it is certainly true that unless criticism is technical, personal and fairly frequent it is not likely to engage a writer's enthusiasm. One reason is that the public kind of criticism is usually concerned with finished work in which the writer no longer has much interest. Another reason is that if the writer is a scrupulous one he has usually, in the course of writing, threshed out as best he could every issue raised by the critic and a great many more

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besides. Among the reviews my own work has received, there have been several which seemed to me well-studied, careful and probably useful to readers. One was useful to me in showing me that two lines ought to be dropped from a poem; but not very useful, since the poem will probably never be reprinted. One, by its fine misunderstandings and general fertility, was a spur to do a particular kind of thing better next time (this was a review by Edmund Wilson of Fitts' and my translation of the *Antigone*).

But public criticism must always, I should think, have its function in accurately informing and awakening readers and by analysis reminding them of the exactions of fine art. This is a difficult and peculiar labor, and the conditions of newspaper reviewing are unfavorable to it. They are not so unfavorable, however, as to justify the assignment of important poetry to the New York *Times'* Percy Hutchinson or the publication of such full-blown, miraculous nonsense as Robert P. T. Coffin recently achieved in a review of a Millay book for the New York *Herald-Tribune.* Taking these two as examples, I cannot attribute either directly to corruption through advertising; editorial hum-drum and literary insanity in the reviewers are as much or more to blame. Likewise in the weekly liberal journals, the quality of a specific review may be attributed largely to the person who writes it. It is his own fault, nobody else's, if he yields to "political pressures" and writes dishonestly; it is also his fault if his writing lacks taste and precision. It seems to me unfortunate to shift too much responsibility from individuals to the abstractions of "politics" or "advertising," prevalent though these admittedly are. Sainte-Beuve had his staggering superficialities. It is true that the newspaper supplements badly need invigoration and that belle lettristic and Marxist myopia need equally to be corrected. It is also true that to discuss works of art with clarity and justice is a job that exceptional men only will ever perform. But it is scarcely true that serious literary criticism has now become an "isolated cult," whatever that means. There is nothing any more Eleusinian about Wilson, Eliot and Blackmur than there was about Erasmus and Scaliger, Arnold and Brunetière.

4. No. Yes, obviously.

5. Groups, classes, organizations, regions, religions and systems of thought have, like the starry universe, environed me since birth, and to those of my immediate environment I have paid whatever allegiance seemed appropriate or necessary. Even were my writing a chemically pure expression of myself as an individual it yet must yield out the elements of those allegiances: my family (a group); my occupations of baby, child, student, etc. (classes); my university (an organization); my regions, religions and systems of thought. The question poses false alternatives.

6. As I have indicated before, I cannot discuss "American writing as a

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whole" with any sense of knowing what I'm talking about. It seems to me healthy that good intelligences should be focused on political issues, and certain political and social writing has interested me a great deal. So far as I am concerned, however, salvation lies neither in political action nor in indifference to it. I would not admit sympathy for uncritical emphasis on anything, but I am certainly sympathetic to Americans who wish to articulate as much as possible of their own environment. It is necessary as usual to discriminate between the pure discoverers and those who vulgarize what has been discovered.

7. For at least seven years the question has been inescapable. As a burning question it is now about as dismal as "Have you considered the question of your attitude towards jazz?" The general wrong which burdens the world must be fought and suffered in each individual life; it is an evil inclusive of but immeasurably greater than war; its manifestations are more constant and closer to home. As we understand, condemn and weep for private wrongs, by the same token we condemn, though we may have to live through, the mass denial of life which is war. Writers who have access to the knowledge of the world now know much more than ever before about the causes and characteristics of war; it is their responsibility to write what they know and to keep on writing it, not with delusions of power but with respect, war or peace, for the truth.

R. P. Blackmur:

1. It is only when asked that I am conscious of a Usable Past; when I feel that it exists, and that I am its product. When not asked I do not distinguish it as a separable question; and even when asked the distinction seems artificial, made for purposes of discourse, and not otherwise germane to any *problem* in any writing I have done or expect to do. In short, I believe that the Past is Usable and is Used without regard to my precise consciousness of it but just insofar as it is available to me. As it happens, Henry James is more available to me than Walt Whitman, not because of a difference in magnitude which might be unfavourable to James, but because James got more of his intention on the page than Whitman did; at least for me. On the other hand, I know that for many, intentions are more useful than actualities; and I do not mean to be invidious: I should say that intentions predominated in the New Testament. What is actual is very

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far from motivating thought or action; it is only their result; so it may be that what we mean when we say Whitman is more relevant as motive power for American writing, present and future, than what we mean when we say James. . . . As to the part of your question which asks whether or not the usable past is mostly American, I should say that it ought to be so in history and that it ought not to be so, and cannot be so, in other allegiances. I cannot imagine John Bunyan and Mark Twain as not thoroughly English and American; but I cannot imagine either of them without the Greek and Hebrew Testaments. As for myself I should not like to feel that I could only use Hawthorne at the expense of Dostoieffsky or Melville at the expense of Shakespeare or Emerson at the expense of Montaigne. Is not the Past an institution like the Common Law?—intricate, devious, desultory, confused?—yet shaping the patterns by which we act and feel and itself modified by the patterns it newly shapes?

2. I should like to think of myself as writing for a wide audience in all of my imaginative work; I know that as a fact I write for a limited, scattered, largely accidental audience. I believe that it is due to my own defects—of style and sensibility and scope—that my audience is so limited; I have no personal justification for complaint. On the other hand I know that most of my contemporaries whom I admire suffer from neglect through no personal defect; the lack of deep interest and performance is the readers' not the writers'. I assume that this condition has always prevailed; that it is due in our day partly to the money cost of reading, partly to anthology-minded teaching of literature, and partly to plain incapacity. I suppose thirty or forty thousand persons a year may read Moby Dick or Tom Jones; that is an accident of education. A hundred and twenty odd thousand copies of Santayana's Last Puritan were sold in the year of publication; that is an accident of fashion. The potential audience for serious reading if money and the anthology-mind are ignored should be somewhere between those figures: say seventy-five thousand readers of imaginative literature—hardly enough to support fifty writers at the rate of a book every other year. Fortunately for the writers, the meretricious audience reads serious books for the wrong reasons; like voters. In my own case, and for the record: most of what I publish is literary criticism: it is deliberately addressed to a small audience. I do not see how aside from journalism serious and technical literary criticism can command more than an audience of a few thousand, unless it is taken up in the colleges.

3. I have been unusually lucky in the criticism my own work has received both in magazines and in the New York newspapers; over half of it has been honest and helpful. I should say that the corruption of the literary supplements by advertising—which is conspicuous—is no more damaging, and perhaps less so, than the damage due to the selection of ignorant or patronising reviewers and the lack of editorial discipline, applied before-

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hand, as to what constitutes a fair review. Political pressure in the Liberal weeklies is something I have surmised and heard about; I have never experienced it, although I have contributed to three off and on for some years. Corrupt or not, political pressure is to be expected; I think most of it is honest and convinced; the corruption is of taste and the critical faculty itself: bigotry and hope—worse evils to combat, by far, than intellectual venality. . . . Whether these corruptions have made serious literary criticism an "isolated cult" I do not know. I should doubt it. Being on occasion a serious critic myself, I find it hard to tell whether I am isolated and part of a cult, or working cooperatively and a functional part of a culture. One varies in sentiment to different reactions.

4. I have never found it possible to earn a living entirely by writing what I prefer to write. Except for a few successful novelists I know no one of my generation who has. I don't know any painters or composers or sculptors who have either. Journalism, lecturing, teaching, and editorial work seem to go with being an artist in any sort. Part of the rub comes not in the structure of society but in the weakness of the individual. The average man who thinks of himself as a writer wants to live like his betters in money, and so far thinks he ought to that he deserts his own profession for theirs; that is the great reason why the average writer does not count much as a writer. The bums of the literary world, who do no work at all, seem to me better examples of the profession than that. This is another way of saying that Americans have not yet tried writing as a profession except on the lesser levels. But so far as the economic system goes it gives a place to the writer exactly as precarious as to the lobster-fisherman, and with less investment, or any man of odd jobs. I do not mean that I think this situation laudable or comfortable; I mean that the writer who has talent and a little recognition has a pretty good chance of getting along as well as the lobsterman with only a few odd jobs thrown in. The writer without talent or without recognition has no chance at all.

5. I do not believe that I feel any allegiance to a group, class, organization, region, religion, or system of thought. I do not conceive my writing as expressing myself as an individual. It may be one or both; but I neither believe nor conceive, and if I did I should try to change my habits. I try to express what I am writing about. The attempt at objective expression naturally involves all sorts of personal attitudes and allegiances—they may be the skeleton of the work, even—but these are never of primary concern during the exercise of the craft.

6. I suppose the leftist tendency in writing since the depression began is partly due to emphatic and unavoidable observation of the insecurity and confusion of the individual and the group in our society: social awareness; and partly due to the inoculation, variously reacted to, of one con-

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centrate or another of Marxism: the problem of society. I don't know how I feel about it; I feel it as something that happened. The only "how" in my feeling concerns the abuse of acquired political insight in fields where it has no actualising application; where the stiffening of thought became rigid, formulaistic, brittle: not to be touched: set. The artist and the critic cannot set except dead. It is the old story of the chaos of life ordered in art; if you order life first, there will be nothing to enliven your art. But it is a pleasant and warming thing to see writers and artists aware of greater areas of the life around and behind them. . . . Literary nationalism is no help any more than German nationalism. The specifically American elements in our culture are good material for the historian and critic; the practicing writer has them anyway and does not need to know what they are.

7. Ever since as a sophomore in high school I discovered—or rather just had chucked in my face—the personal corruption and cowardice of our wealthy classes in connection with the last world war, I have had an emotional conviction that war is the very complete debauching devil. I am therefore, I suppose, though later reading may have had something to do with it, a pacifist and an isolationist. The responsibility of the writer towards a general war is just his responsibility as a citizen without office: to work against war and the war spirit: even to witch-hunt that debauchery if he can. But if war comes and is made popular I do not see that he can do much more than shut up and keep his head. There will be no escape. If the war is not popular and the regime collapses there will be another sort of war and he will be in it anyway.

Horace Gregory:

1. a.) "Usable past" is a beautiful trick phrase, meaning as little or as much as "Ivory tower" and is to be distrusted because it has entered the jargon of current criticism without proper evaluation. Am I conscious of using a "usable past"? Certainly not while I am writing: the imagination doesn't function that way. The "usable past" is realized before or after writing a poem and is sometimes made "conscious" as the poem is edited or rewritten. Mr. I. A. Richards, in his "Coleridge On Imagination" makes a partial explanation of the phenomenon. I have found something that may be called a "usable past" in a number of my poems: and the most deeply hidden is an influence of Latin verse (of which I am "conscious")

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but how deeply it runs, I cannot know consciously. Other elements of a "usable past" may be found in the titles of my poems and in the names of men and places mentioned within them. b.) Most of the names of men and places in my poems are American: I would say that every writer is conditioned by his time and place and language. c.) Emerson, Randolph Bourne, Concord, New Milford, New York, Cassandra are among the figures and places named, but this list does not include the perhaps more significant American names I have invented. d.) Is James more or less relevant than Whitman today? This is a question that excites prejudices and makes hash of critical values. A good writer can create a "usable past" out of "The Child's Book of Knowledge"—and make it relevant. One of the most distinguished of contemporary poets has already done so. A bad writer can read Shakespeare and come away from the reading with nothing but the iambic pentameter and high-flown rolling through his head. As for James and Whitman, it depends upon the ability of the writer who reads them to make them seem relevant to what he has to say.

2. a.) Never, while I am writing. The poor hack writer or the routine journalist has to, and that is why most of his writing is at times dishonest or unclear or both. He has to keep his mind on what the boss will say—in some cases, this may be necessary discipline, but this is true only on the lowest levels of writing. Every writer who has something to say is concerned with the art of communication—it is that concern and not the concern of "audiences" that makes his writing clear and forceful. If he writes well, his so-called "audience" will be glad to listen to his play, his speech by radio, or to read his book. This last statement is a resounding platitude that fairly shrieks at me from the four walls of the room, but it should be said again today. I might add that no one reads a book and truly values it merely because it is something called "literature": the writer's first concern should be with human beings, and he should write well enough to prevent himself as well as those who read him from being bored. A writer should write *from* his "audience," rather than hope to write *for* or *to* or *at* it. He should write *out of* whatever people, environments, places, ideas, or emotions have given him a sense of reality, and therefore he should write *out OF* the conviction of being identified with them. b.) The most reliable description of an American "audience" may be found in Helen and Robert Lynd's "Middletown" and "Middletown In Transition." c.) Without definite figures at hand, I would say that the quality of secondary school and university education in the U. S. has improved within the last ten years and that therefore a potential and perhaps an actual "audience" for "serious" writing has increased.

3. a.) That depends upon the source of the criticism, or rather, the sources of it. Its "value" depends upon the places where it appears and for each I have a different set of values. I am not one of those writers who makes a profession of quarreling with his critics: with a few exceptions, I

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believe my critics have done their best, in both praise and blame, and I have also done my best in giving them something to write about. As each book is published, the writer has, for the moment, a particular advantage over all who write about it: he has had his say. Even the most adverse or venal critic cannot unsay it. Therefore, I believe it foolish for any writer to find fault with his adverse critics, or to attack them—when he might better employ his time by continuing work on his next book. b.) "Serious literary criticism" has always been a rarity. And in America perhaps the last twenty years has produced more critics worth reading than any equal period of time in our literary history. Of those who have published books since 1919 the names of such diverse and excellent critics of literature, such as Vernon Louis Parrington, Paul Elmer More, Ezra Pound and George Santayana are almost certain to be remembered. A more detailed summary of this period may be found in M. D. Zabel's anthology, "Literary Opinion In America." c.) Unless one has a private income or a subsidized paper for which to write, I agree that it is extremely difficult to find time or place for "serious literary criticism." This does not mean that critics and reviewers are writing dishonestly for New York newspapers and liberal weeklies: but their wings are often clipped and, in most cases, they are docile and easily persuaded individuals. Among them there are always the few who write for "audiences" with both eyes on the boss and who must do so, either for a living or political advancement—or both. The difference between the newspapers and the liberal weeklies (I am still speaking of their literary reviews) is slight, but well defined: and that difference may be measured by the higher quality of an occasional essay appearing in The Nation or The New Republic. Such an essay, when it does appear, is obviously exempt from the demands of a business department or an advertising agency and is of greater "value" than anything one reads in the literary sections of a newspaper. Whenever "political pressure" has been exerted upon the literary policies of a liberal weekly, it is also clear that these very policies have been modified by the greater forces of New York literary politics which is a subject too complex, too enervating, too destructive and yet too effete and trivial for any writer to waste his time evaluating it.

4. a.) No. The only other alternative is a system of patronage, whether from individuals, or grants or funds or publishers. b.) I doubt it. But has there ever existed an "economic system" that supported writers merely because they were poets? One always returns to the alternative of patronage or earning one's living: and it depends upon the character or moral strength of the writer as to whether or not either alternative becomes dishonorable.

5. a.) I have answered this question in answering questions 1 and 2.

6. a.) Frankly, I don't know what a "political tendency" "as a whole"

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has been, and this is a question that should be answered with a fair degree of accuracy. Perhaps Charles and Mary Beard's book, "America In Midpassage" would be of assistance here; it does contain one kind of answer to the question, yet even here the statement concerning literary contributions to the last ten years is clouded by inaccuracies of time sequence and of emphasis on certain kinds of writing. This question should be answered by Mr. Gallup and his corps of investigators. b.) I believe that a "political tendency" in writing moves far more slowly than some people think it does. The contradictions within it tend to cancel each other, and I believe it is still too soon to define the actual meaning of the "political tendency" of the past ten years. That kind of phenomenon is always less important than phenomena of cultural relevance. A "political" relevance is always contained within the more general (and at times, more specific) cultural relevance. A writer should keep his eye on human beings or human behavior or on himself as a human being rather than on any one political tendency or movement. It is only in so far as a "political tendency" affects himself or those around him that a writer should evaluate its meaning. c.) A writer's home and environments are always important: these are his "roots"; but he should also have enough sensibility and curiosity to realize that he is also a citizen of the world. Much of the strength of our own culture has been gained from a particular adaptation and interpretation of European attitudes. In one sense, to be an "American" is also to be concerned with European cultures; in that sense, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot are never more "American" than when they are most "European." For the writer, his true "nationality" is the language in which he writes: and even this rule has had its notable exceptions.

7. a.) I cannot know until the next war arrives. Has the last world war actually ceased? I doubt it. b.) The writer's responsibility is to go on writing.

LETTERS

FOR AN ANTI-WAR JOURNAL

Sirs:

I'm writing you merely to express the hope—and in the expectation there are others with the same hope—that PARTISAN REVIEW will serve continuously as an anti-war journal. I have read again "War and the Intellectuals: Act Two" in the Spring 1939 number. It still seems to me excellent—more so now: it indicates the 'usable past,' the reference—*The Masses, The Seven Arts*, and perhaps best of all Randolph Bourne. . . . Some legends explode of themselves—for example, the official Soviet-Communist Party legend (of 48 hours) that the Berlin-Moscow anti-aggression pact would halt Nazi invasion and protect Poland. But there are other legends, such as that Chamberlain and Hitler represent anything but two sides of the same coin, such as that ever-recurring one that *this* war is at last the Holy War to liberate the world: they will not diminish but increase. There must be active work against the lies, and its best action will be a preparation for pacifism. So, at least, I believe, and I hope PARTISAN REVIEW believes also.

Sincerely,

WINFIELD T. SCOTT,
Providence, R. I.

—As Marxists we don't believe in "pacifism" as it is usually defined. But we do intend to expose and oppose the war in PARTISAN REVIEW, *and welcome Mr. Scott's letter.*—THE EDITORS.

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PROTEST FROM ARKANSAS

Sirs:

It is my impression that the more reputable literary publications assign books to reviewers who may be presumed to have some previous knowledge of the subject matter, yet I find that in your current issue THESE ARE OUR LIVES is reviewed by Dwight Macdonald, who confesses that "many of these stories seem as remote as tales of some tribe in the interior of Africa."

Aside from its superb literary excellence, the importance of the book is due very largely to its amazing veracity. These *are* the people speaking. These stories are typical not of isolated individuals but of literally thousands of people living throughout the South. If your reviewer had had any knowledge whatever of the South, he would not have criticised the editor for giving "no indication of the grounds of his selection beyond that he chose what seemed to him 'the most typical and most important'," for he would at once have recognized the authentic voice of the Southern people speaking.

If you are going to label your periodical "A Quarterly of . . . Marxism," you had better get down to earth and find out something about the hundreds of thousands of the poor, the hungry, the homeless, and the oppressed in the South. Certainly you should not publish reviews on such subjects by one who writes smugly that he "lives in a big city and has always had enough to eat.'" Why don't you stop this petty sniping at "Stalinism" and do something really important for present-day Marxism?

Sincerely and indignantly yours,
JOHN T. APPLEBY,
Cotter, Arkansas.

—It is unnecessary for Mr. Appleby to defend either These Are Our Lives *or the oppressed hundreds of thousands — millions would be more accurate—of Southern people, against any attack by me. I praised the book highly, and my review made clear where my sympathies lie as to the people presented in the volume. The statements about my having enough to eat and about the remoteness of the social milieu of the book from my own urban experience were intended not as gibes or smug boasts but as an indication of the orientation from which I approached the book. Nor can I see any reason why only Southerners are competent to deal with books on the South.*—D.M.

WANTED—MORE KAFKA, SILONE, STEIN

Sirs:

May I say that I enjoyed greatly your first three issues, but not so much your doldrum (last) issue. Somehow my concept of a quarterly envisages a weightier central feature than a lot of catch-as-catch-can opinions by writers as to audiences, usable pasts and the like, which are good enough for supplementary pages in the rear. . . . Let's have more of Kafka, Silone, Gertrude Stein in fiction; more of the authoritative analyses of the cultural endeavors throughout the world, not excluding the U.S.A. (I mean films, plays, art and music development); more of analyses of works on economic theories and social findings; for instance the last issue missed a fine chance of discussing the state of theoretical science, especially Russia's attitude to genetics. In brief, your quarterly should aim to become a real ART, SCIENCE & SOCIETY. What do you say?

Sincerely,
A SUBSCRIBER,
Chula Vista, Calif.

—We say we agree—though not as to the "doldrum" issue—and we refer "A Subscriber" to the present number as to some extent conforming to his standards.—THE EDITORS.

WANTED—SUCCESSIVE PAGINATION

Sirs:

Why not page-number successive issues of PARTISAN REVIEW consecutively and publish an index per volume for convenience in binding and reference? The present arrangement is exasperating.

GRATTAN FREYER,
Trinity College,
Dublin, Eire.

—We are glad to adopt this suggestion. Beginning with the next issue, the first of the six-times-a-year PARTISAN REVIEW, *pages will be numbered consecutively throughout each volume.*—THE EDITORS.

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War Is The Issue!

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO the League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism addressed its founding statement "to all artists and writers concerned about the present drift of the United States to reaction and war."

"Cultural circles, formerly progressive," we wrote then, "are now capitulating to the spirit of fascism while ostensibly combatting its letter. . . . To the war drive of the fascist powers, they reply with a war drive of their own. . . . Inspired by Stalinist and social-reformist propaganda, they advocate a new war for 'democracy.' Yet this war must give birth to military dictatorship and to forms of intellectual repression far more violent than those evoked by the last war."

Since this was written, the Stalinist regime has joined hands with Hitler, and Poland has been partitioned between Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. The thunder of the second world war is now shaking Europe. These great historical events have shattered old alignments over here and are creating new groupings. Less than a week before the Berlin-Moscow pact was announced, for example, four hundred American writers, artists, educators and intellectuals signed their names to a statement of faith in the Soviet Union as a bulwark of "democracy." Clearly worried by the formation of the LCFS and similar groups, the four hundred sharply rebuked all critics of Stalinism as friends of fascism. This document has now become a historical curiosity.

But this is no time for crying, "We told you so!" The actual outbreak of war in Europe has reduced even the Stalin-Hitler pact to a second-rate question. The great question now is: what is the attitude of American intellectuals, regardless of past illusions, towards American participation in the war? War has become *the* issue.

It took almost three years to swing the United States into the last war. Already the Roosevelt administration has served notice that it will attempt to do in months what the Wilson administration took years to achieve. Already it is devoting its chief energies not to domestic reform but to foreign policy. So far as it lies in the power of the New Deal, American blood and treasure will be lavishly expended to help France and England crush once more their ancient imperialist rival.

We loathe and abominate fascism as the chief enemy of all culture, all real democracy, all social progress. But the last war showed only too clearly that we can have no faith in imperialist crusades to bring freedom to any people. Our entry into the war, under the slogan of "Stop Hitler!" would actually result in the immediate introduction of totalitarianism over here. Only the German people can free themselves of the fascist yoke. The American masses can best help them by fighting *at home* to keep their own liberties.

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The war issue most intimately concerns American intellectuals. Parrington summarizes the effects of the last war on our culture: "With the entry of America into the war came a sharp change in literary development. Regimentation due to war psychology destroyed the movement of social criticism. . . . The liberal movement in economics and politics came to an abrupt end." Nor can we have any illusions about the effect on our cultural life of American entry into this war. It will mean corruption for those who accept it, spiritual if not physical imprisonment for those who refuse to conform. Every branch of our culture will be set back for decades.

What can American artists and writers do at this time?

In a practical, immediate sense, they can help make articulate the strong opposition which the great majority of the American people still feel to our entry into the war. The masses, who have nothing to gain and everything to lose from another war, are far from endorsing the President's foreign policy. But this sentiment can again be cheated, deceived, propagandized out of existence as it was in the last war, unless it is made conscious and given organized expression. Here the intellectuals can be of the greatest service.

In a more general sense, American writers and artists must put themselves on record against the war as a symbol of their acceptance of the responsibilities of their profession. In the last war, a whole generation of writers committed spiritual suicide by taking part in the orgy. If only for the sake of their own integrity, American intellectuals must now signalize their opposition not only to war in the abstract but specifically to American entry into this war. It would be a betrayal of the human spirit for them to keep silent at this time.

War is the great issue today. We call upon all American artists, writers and professional workers to join us in this statement of implacable opposition to this dance of war in which Wall Street joins with the Roosevelt administration.

(*Signed*)

Lionel Abel	Melvin J. Lasky	William Phillips
Kay Boyle	James Laughlin IV	Arthur Pincus
James Burnham	Dwight Macdonald	Fairfield Porter
V. F. Calverton	John McDonald	Philip Rahv
Eleanor Clark	Sherry Mangan	Kenneth Rexroth
James Peter Cooney	Ralph Manheim	T. C. Robinson
James A. Decker	Alan Mather	James Rorty
David C. DeJong	Clark Mills	Harold Rosenberg
Paul Dobbs	Norman Mini	Harry Roskolenko
F. W. Dupee	George L. K. Morris	Meyer Schapiro
James T. Farrell	Culbertson Myers	Delmore Schwartz
Charles Henri Ford	Gilbert Neiman	Winfield T. Scott
Philip H. Gray, Jr.	Helen Neville	Gordon Sylander
Clement Greenberg	George Novack	John Wheelwright
William Gruen	Lyman Paine	William Carlos Williams
Esther D. Hamill	Kenneth Patchen	
Robert Hivnor	Carl Peterson	Bertram D. Wolfe

—*for the* LEAGUE FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM AND SOCIALISM

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The following non-members of the League have also signed the above statement:

Louise Bogan	Robert Fitzgerald	Victor Lawson
Anita Brenner	Balcomb Greene	Gorham B. Munson
Joseph Cornell	Gertrude Greene	Katharine Anne Porter
Richard Eberhart	Weldon Kees	

Please address all communications to: Dwight Macdonald, 117 East 10th Street, New York City.

A Letter To The L. A. W.

Secretary, League of American Writers,
381 Fourth Avenue, New York City

October 5, 1939.

Dear Sir:

Until August 21st, 1939, the League of American Writers functioned as the most active political organization among American writers and intellectuals. Through its national and regional congresses, public meetings, pamphlets, questionaires, and statements to the press, it made known its position on every important issue.

The official call to its congress held last June stated that the League supported "cooperation of this country with other nations and peoples opposed to Fascism—including the Soviet Union, which has been the most consistent defender of peace" and "in general, the defense of a free world in which writers can function." In numerous statements and resolutions it called for the organization of a "democratic peace front" against Fascism, etc., etc.

Despite the world-shaking events that have occurred since August 21st, the formerly eloquent and ubiquitous League of American Writers has not been heard from. Nothing on the war, nothing on the Nazi-Soviet pact, nothing on the partition of Poland, in fact, nothing. Does this organization still exist? If so, has it anything to say to American writers and intellectuals on the following questions?

1. What is the character of the present war? Is it an imperialist war or a war of the democracies against Fascism?
2. What is the role of the Stalin regime in this war? Did the Stalin-Hitler pact advance the cause of world peace or did it promote Fascist aggression? Does the League approve of the partition of Poland between Germany and Russia?

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3. Does the League still hold that the United States should cooperate with the Soviet Union in order to stop the onward march of Fascism?
4. Does the League still maintain that the United States should adopt a "collective security" policy? If so, what countries should be included in such a common front?
5. Does the League of American Writers still consider the Communist Party to be a force for peace, democracy, and socialism?

If the League of American Writers can recover its voice, we shall be glad to hear its replies.

Yours truly,

JOHN DEWEY
F. W. DUPEE
JAMES FARRELL
B. D. N. GREBANIER
LOUIS M. HACKER
SIDNEY HOOK
SUZANNE LA FOLLETTE
FERDINAND LUNDBERG
EUGENE LYONS
MAX NOMAD
WILLIAM PHILLIPS
PHILIP RAHV
MEYER SCHAPIRO
BENJAMIN STOLBERG
FRANCES WINWAR

Statement

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Acts of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of *Partisan Review* published quarterly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1939.

State of New York, County of New York, ss.:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Nancy G. Macdonald, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Business Manager of the *Partisan Review* and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Partisan Review (unincorporated association), 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.

Editors, F. W. Dupee, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.; Dwight Macdonald, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.; George L. K. Morris, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.; William Phillips, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.; Philip Rahv, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.

Managing Editor, None.

Business Manager, Nancy G. Macdonald, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.

2. That the owner is: Unincorporated Association. President, Philip Rahv, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.; Vice-President, F. W. Dupee, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.; Secretary-Treasurer, Nancy G. Macdonald, 117 East 10th Street, N. Y. C.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

(Signed) Nancy G. Macdonald.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 9th day of October, 1939. (Seal) Manuel Lichtenstein, Notary Public, Bronx County. Bronx County Clerk's No. 161. N. Y. Co. Clerk's No. 763. Reg. No. 11.452. Commission expires March 30, 1941.

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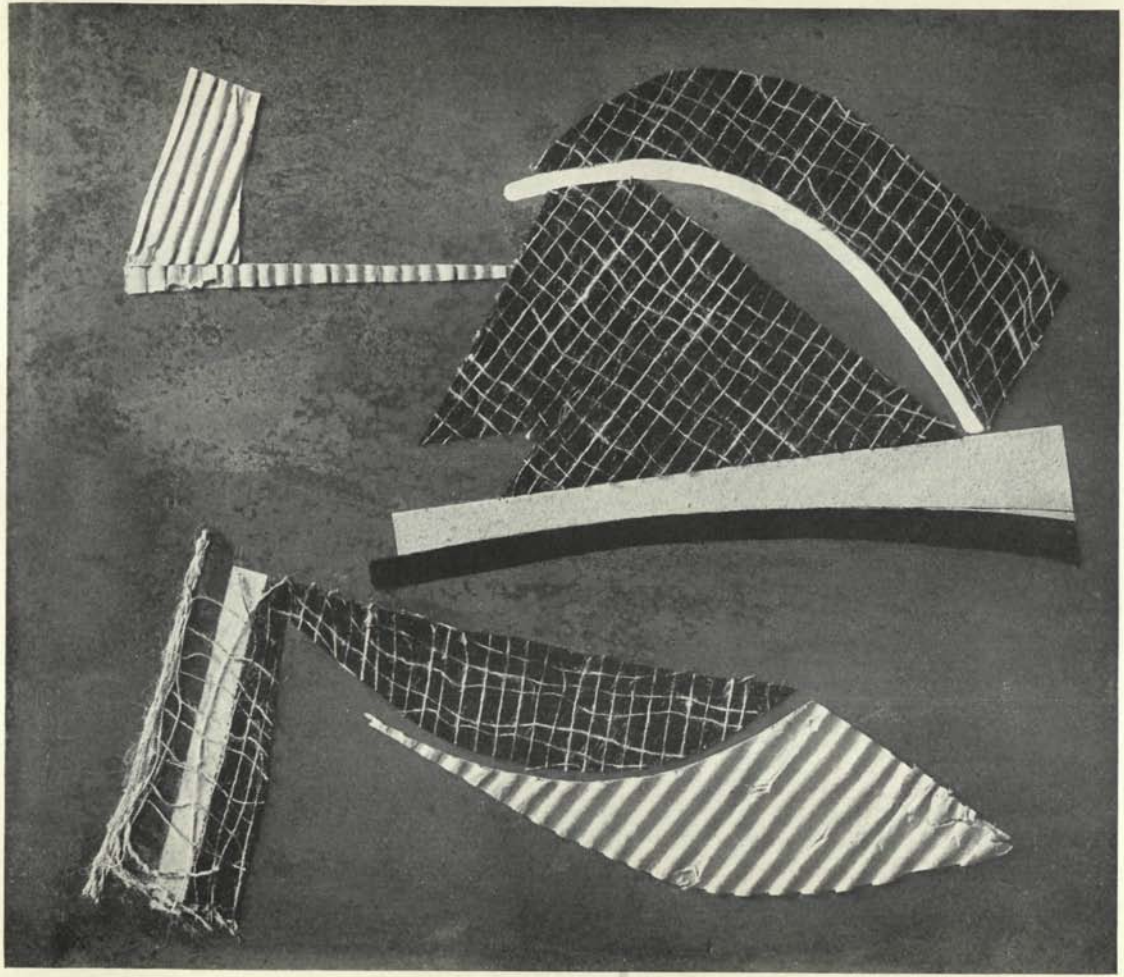

ALBERTO MAGNELLI, Collage
Paris, 1937

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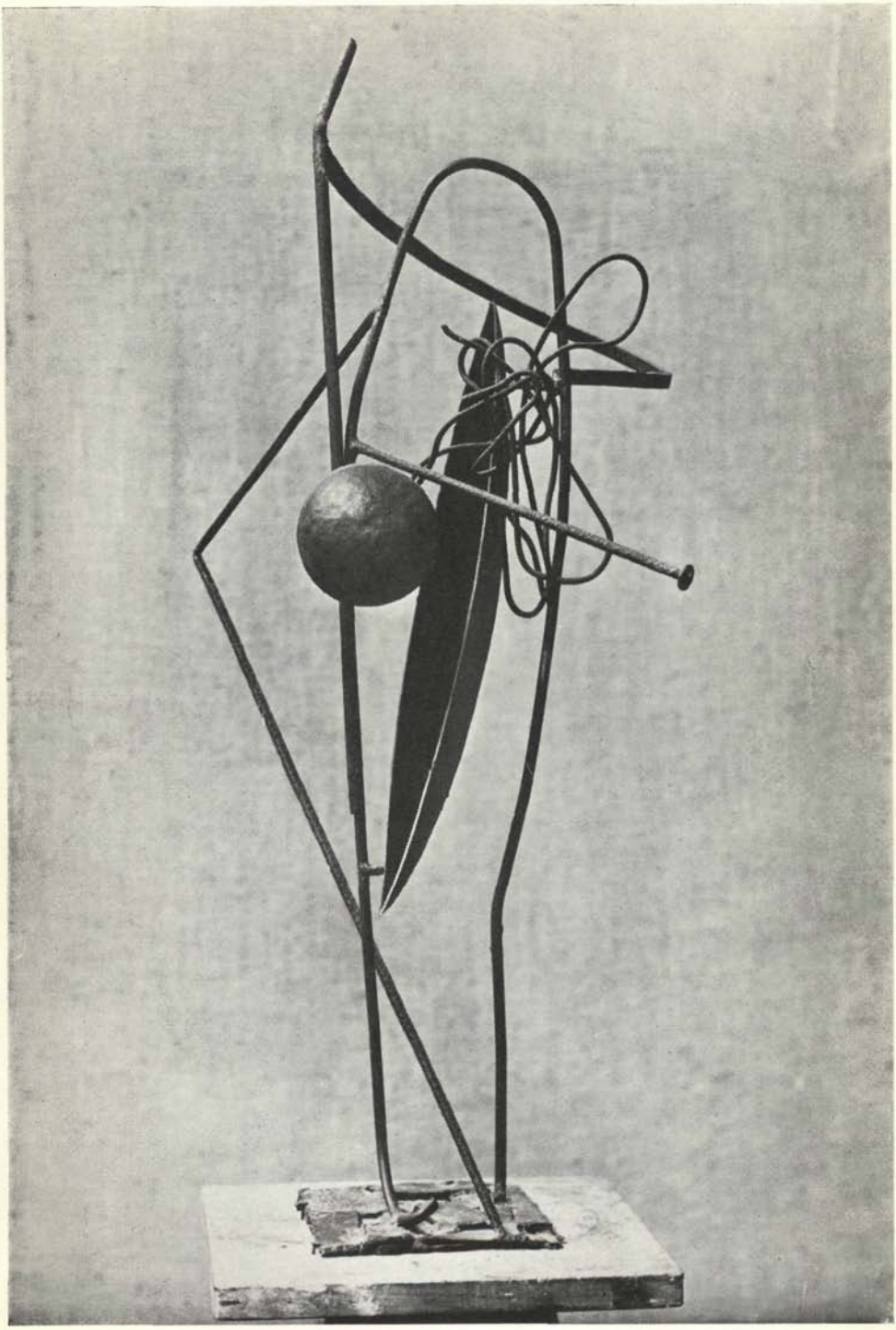

HANS HARTUNG, Iron Sculpture
Paris, 1938

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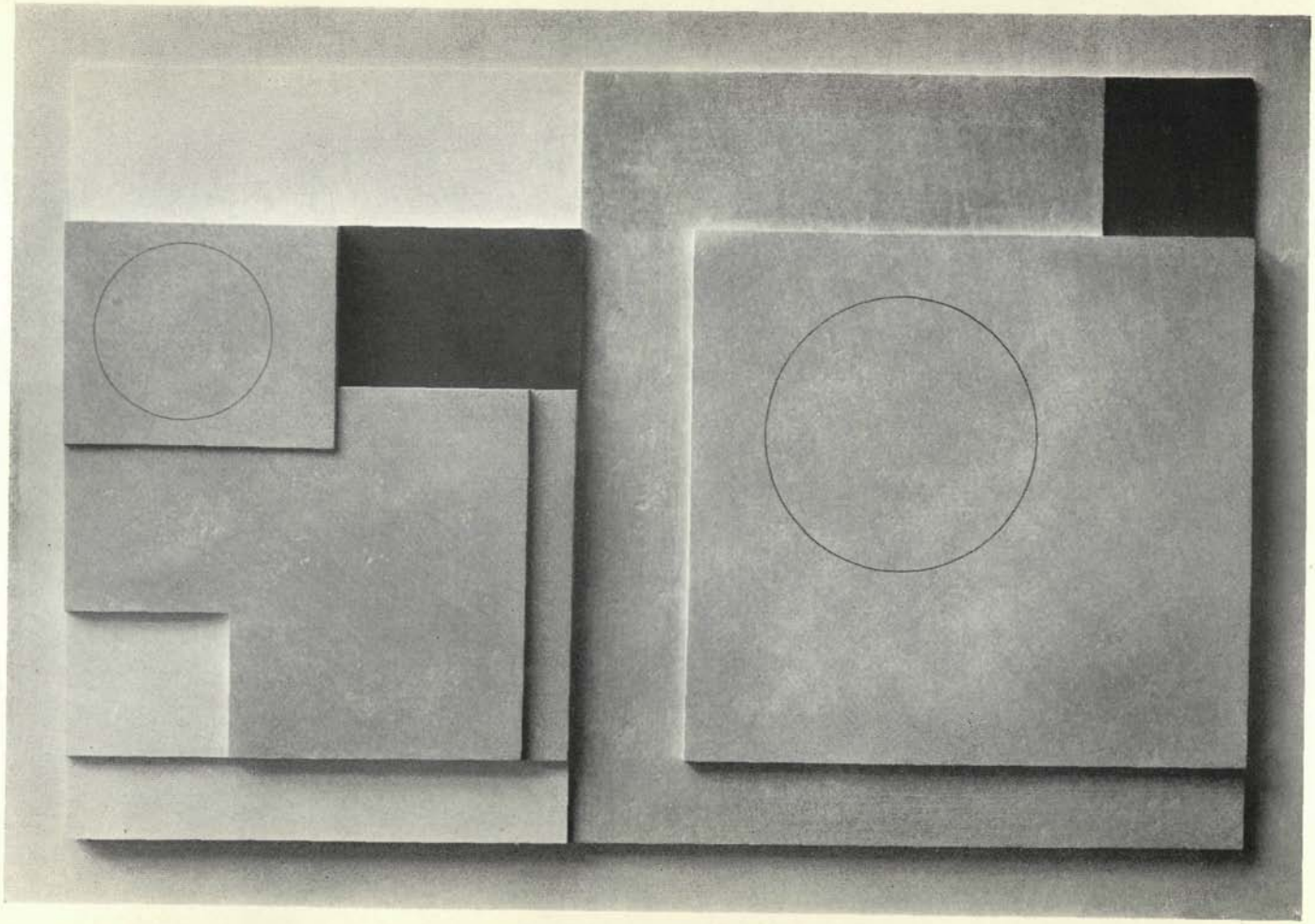

BEN NICHOLSON, Painted Relief
London, 1939

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PARTISAN REVIEW

Contributors, 1937-1939

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